

TRADE SECRETS: GEORGIC POETRY AND THE RISE OF FINANCE

By
Katarina Louisa O'Briain

A dissertation submitted to Johns Hopkins University in conformity with the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Baltimore, Maryland
May, 2018

© 2018 Katarina Louisa O'Briain
All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

“Trade Secrets: Georgic Poetry and the Rise of Finance” reads neoclassical verse alongside artisanal manuals and works of political economy to argue that the language of craft labor provides a privileged medium through which to grapple with crises of the Early Enlightenment, from struggles over the Glorious Revolution to the aftershocks of the South Sea Bubble. Critics have long cast georgic, with its focus on agricultural labor, as an instrument of scientific improvement or mode of reactionary nostalgia for landed elites. But these accounts have overlooked a crucial, if perhaps quieter, story of georgic poetry, which lies in its heightened attention to craft understood as both material fabrication and formal workmanship. For John Dryden and Alexander Pope, the reticence of artisanal knowledge provides a strategy for dealing with the market pressures facing poetry and the other arts. It also allows these oppositional poets to make seditious claims without explicitly having to state them. By the time of Jonathan Swift and John Gay’s mock iterations of the mode, however, craft is less a salutary means of evading censorship than a well-worn method of political deception — craftiness, so to speak — practiced by politicians and financial projectors alike.

Taking up and reinscribing the Machiavellian poles of *virtù* and *fortuna*, or skill and chance, which were foundational to Enlightenment British Republicanism, these writers look to georgic as a mode through which to meditate on the paradoxical relation between careful craft labor and the vagaries that remain beyond one’s control. In this respect, my project recovers a surprising antecedent to contemporary responses to environmental, social, and financial crisis, which continue to manifest, or attempt to overcome, that same melancholy combination of resistance and inevitability. The project

ends with a coda on the role of accident in Frances Burney's novels, which provide a crucial alternative to moral arguments for craft labor in the period.

Directors: Jonathan Kramnick, Mary Favret, and Sharon Achinstein

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my advisors, Jonathan Kramnick, Mary Favret, and Sharon Achinstein, for helping to give me and this project direction over the past several years. A flawed and provisional document like the dissertation can't really do justice to such amazing mentorship — or to such patience, generosity, and wisdom — but I will try to live up to it as I continue this research.

Thank you to Tracy Glink and Sally Hauf for their hard work in making the English department run smoothly; to Chris Nealon for being willing to talk to me about the contemporary relevance of eighteenth-century poetry; and to Roger Maioli and Will Miller for making Hopkins an exciting place to work on the Enlightenment. I feel very lucky to have been in this department and am grateful to everyone past and present who has helped provide a sense of community in which to do what might otherwise have felt like individual and isolated work.

For helping to fund this project I would like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Gloria Flaherty Scholarship in Eighteenth-Century Studies. The Lewis Walpole Library provided a fellowship for archival research, for which I am most grateful, and the members and directors of the Folger Library's "Debating Capitalism: Early Modern Political Economies" inspired conversations which will continue to inform and direct the political context of this work.

From Alberta, Baltimore, and elsewhere, Rowan Bayne, Claire Caplan, Jon Mottram, Fay Obenauer, and Izzy Obenauer were wonderful and crucial presences in my life. Thank you to Corrinne Harol, who has been a thoughtful and supportive mentor since my very first English class at the University of Alberta. Against all odds, Nora

Lambrecht and Mande Zecca made Baltimore feel like home and me feel like a human being. I couldn't imagine better friends or colleagues.

I could never have dreamed of making a living studying literature without my incredible parents, Lulu and Kevin O'Briain, who did everything in their power to help me get here, even if they weren't always sure why I'd want to be. This would not have been possible without their generous and tireless support or without that of my grandparents: Kay O'Briain, Luisa Vega, and Tanglaw Vega.

Jeffrey Borchert has read the entirety of this dissertation more than once. I wouldn't, and probably won't ever, know where to begin to thank him for making this project and my life so much better.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	vi
INTRODUCTION: Craft and Contingency.....	1
ONE: Dryden's Georgic Fictionality.....	34
TWO: Pope's Chiastic Optimism.....	62
THREE: Swift, Anti-Formalism, and the Georgics of the South Sea.....	106
FOUR: Mock Georgic and the <i>Trivia</i> of Industry.....	142
CODA: Frances Burney and the Art of Accident.....	178
Bibliography.....	206
Curriculum Vitae.....	240

Introduction: Craft and Contingency

This dissertation tracks how georgic — most often understood as the poetry of farm labor — negotiates a crucial tension between careful craftsmanship and the contingencies of modern life, initially in neoclassical poetry and then later as the mode gets taken up by the rise of the novel and contemporary poetic protest. The project begins with a simple discovery: that the rhetorical strategies used by artisans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were shared and even directly adopted by neoclassical poets of the period. From vastly different social positions, poets and artisans turn to a reticent mode of language, replete with figures of repetition, elision, and enactment, to counteract contemporary demands for the dissemination of technical knowledge. This is not the usual story that is told about georgic, a mode more often defined in terms of scientific improvement or the reactionary nostalgia of landed elites.¹ But, as I argue, this poetic turn to craftsmanship offered one possible solution to market pressures facing poetry and the other arts. British georgic flourished at a time when craft was in crisis. While artisans grappled with the demands of an incipient consumer society, the shift from mercantilism to early capitalism, and contemporary initiatives to publicize their trade secrets, poets were likewise dealing with new modes of literary manufacture, the shift from print to

¹ On georgic and science, see Rachel Crawford, *Poetry, Enclosure, and the Vernacular Landscape, 1700–1830* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 92–93; Frans de Bruyn, “From Georgic Poetry to Statistics and Graphs: Eighteenth-Century Representations and the ‘State’ of British Society,” *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 17.1 (2004): 115; and Kevis Goodman, *Georgic Modernity and British Romanticism: Poetry and the Mediation of History* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 22–29. On georgic as a physiocratic mode, see Kurt Heinzelman, “Roman Georgic in the Georgian Age: A Theory of Romantic Genre,” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 33.2 (1991): 192.

patronage, and the rise of the book trade.² Against the increasing commodification of both literary and material artifacts, poets take up craft — understood as both a specialized set of techniques and, in the formal register, “art” in the early eighteenth-century sense of “skill” — as a crucial marker of poetic value and a strategy for political dissent.

Craft was not simply a mode of poetic opposition, however. Over the course of the period, writers become increasingly suspicious of the way that craft repeatedly ends up in the hands of those in power, a tool of deceit rather than protest. The latter half of the dissertation thus reads poetry on financial crisis and the rise of the consumer society as a response to the perils of craft aesthetics and politics. Throughout, this study argues for a more precarious view of the Enlightenment than the one espoused by stories of improvement, accumulation, and landed nostalgia.³ Often meditating on political, financial, and ecological crisis, georgic offers a melancholy mode of muted agency and backbreaking work that lives well beyond the Enlightenment.

Georgic has a long history of being tied to protest. Within the more recent context of anti-capitalist and eco-poetry in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, writers continue to turn to the structure of the georgic precept. Juliana Spahr and Joshua Clover, for instance, end their 24 Theses for the *#Misanthropocene* with a riff on the georgic how-to manual. Echoing T. S. Eliot’s more apocalyptic lines by announcing “This is how

² Neil McKendrick dates the intellectual origins of the consumer society back to the 1690s. See *The Birth of the Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb (London: Europa Publications Limited, 1982).

³ On the ideology of improvement in georgic poetry, see Markman Ellis, “‘Incessant Labour’: Georgic Poetry and the Problem of Slavery,” in *Discourses of Slavery and Abolition: Britain and its Colonies, 1760–1838*, ed. Brycchan Carey, Markman Ellis, and Sarah Salih (New York: Palgrave, 2004), 45–59 and Karen O’Brien, “Imperial Georgic, 1660–1789,” in *The Country and the City Revisited: England and the Politics of Culture, 1550–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), 160–79.

the misanthropocene ends,” the poem then veers into the more practical realm of instruction:

Twentyone. This is how to set an oil well on fire. Rub and lean against it. Spread your front legs and swing your neck at it. The power of a blow depends on the weight of your skull and the arc of your swing. Then sparks.

Twentytwo. Here is how to take out the electrical grid. Pierce the switching protection and control equipment and transformers with hypodermic genitalia and eject into the circuit breakers so as to short circuit or overload currents. Smaller distribution stations may use recloser circuit breakers or fuses for protection of distribution circuits. These too can be pierced by the introduction of a specialized intromittent organ through an external groove overlying the pleural membrane in the fuse wall.

Twentythree. Here is how to capsized container ships. Swim along behind it in a train then grip with the teeth and continue to swim as you insert your claspers into the cloaca and pump.

Twentyfourth of all. Here is how to kill a policeman here is how to abolish culture here is how to knock down a Boeing AH-64D Apache Longbow here is how to loot a grocery store here is how to levitate the Pentagon. Sappho Sappho Sappho not by chanting.⁴

In Clover and Spahr’s hands, Eliot’s “This is the way the world ends” shifts into the world of anti-capitalist, eco-terrorist militancy.⁵ The language of technical instruction here lends itself almost seamlessly to political action, which culminates in the twenty-fourth thesis as a series of georgic precepts run together. Clover and Spahr’s poem indeed seems to work directly against political resignation. They write a few theses earlier, “You know that moment when you realize there is nothing to be done . . .” — a seemingly interrogative phrase that moves instead through a series of musings about how *alma*

⁴ Joshua Clover and Juliana Spahr, *#Misanthropocene: 24 Theses* (Oakland: Commune Editions, 2014), 8–9.

⁵ T.S. Eliot, “The Hollow Men,” in *Collected Poems 1909–1962* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974), line 28.

maters always know your address and UC Davis's policy on killing gophers — “. . . Fuck that moment most of all.”⁶

What is it about the georgic precept that lends itself to anti-capitalist militancy? How does this mode more often known for its celebration of peace after civil war, its endorsement of nation-building and agricultural improvement become a privileged form for grappling with crisis and articulating political resistance? Part of the task of my project is to demonstrate that these modes of protest were already there to begin with, from georgic's Hesiodic and Virgilian origins to its even unlikelier neoclassical iterations. David Slavitt begins to suggest as much in his loose poetic translation of Virgil when he writes: “And failed farmers, like chaff, will blow into town, to Rome, to steal, to starve, perhaps to riot, desperate in their ruin.”⁷ That “perhaps to riot,” I will argue, has an especially strong life in the Enlightenment. But at the same time there's a feeling of inevitability that underlies georgic, a feeling that matters are beyond one's control — that same feeling that Clover and Spahr's misanthropocenic georgic precepts seek to foreclose. Slavitt's Virgilian riot isn't one of careful and measured or militant action. It's rather that of loose “chaff” which “blow[s] into town”; Slavitt's “failed farmers” might riot but they also might starve from their ruin. Implicit in Slavitt's possible riot is “that moment when you realize there is nothing to be done.”

This paradoxical blend of protest and resignation is one that georgic writers of the eighteenth as well as the twentieth and twenty-first centuries repeatedly have to navigate. Diane di Prima's “Revolutionary Letter #3” (1968) begins to sound very much like a

⁶ Clover and Spahr, 6.

⁷ David R. Slavitt, “Georgica I,” in *Eclogues and Georgics of Virgil* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1990), 50.

modern version of Virgil's georgics when she instructs her reader to "store water; make a point of filling your bathtub at the first news of trouble: they turned off the water in the 4th ward for a whole day during the Newark riots; or better yet make a habit of keeping the tub clean and full when not in use change this once a day."⁸ Speaking of the contingency of the seasons rather than that of governmental responses to riot, Dryden's translation of the *Georgics* similarly instructs his reader to "measure his increasing Store" when "cold Weather and continu'd Rain, / The lab'ring Husband in his House restrain."⁹ Yet while Dryden's translation seems to suggest that there is something to be gained by industriousness, by "produc[ing] the plough" and "yok[ing] the sturdy steer" while "yet the spring is young, while Earth unbinds," di Prima offers a more cynical view of matters.¹⁰ Instructing her reader to "store food," she also cautions, punning on "store," "remember the stores may be closed for quite some time."¹¹ This odd blend of protest and resignation returns in Brenda Hillman's more recent "A Short Walk During Late Capitalism," in which she writes: "the left too blue to protest / all those raised hands / like seated Hindu gods / zinc oxide titanium dioxide / a georgics of sunscreen / after a fracking / cross-cultural sunshine / trying not to buy so much shit."¹² A phrase like "georgics of sunscreen" neatly encapsulates this key paradox of the mode: even while georgic might seem to offer the how-to manual style that would structure militancy, action, and solutions it still runs against external limitations. How much can sunscreen

⁸ Diane di Prima, "Revolutionary Letter #3," in *Revolutionary Letters, etc* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1974), lines 1–6.

⁹ John Dryden, *The Georgics I*, in *The Works of John Dryden*, 20 vol., ed. William Frost and Vinton A. Dearing (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1990), 5:book I, lines 350–51, 356.

¹⁰ Dryden, *The Georgics*, book 1, lines 64, 69.

¹¹ di Prima, "Revolutionary Letter #3," lines 17–18.

¹² Brenda Hillman, "A Short Walk During Late Capitalism," in *Seasonal Works with Letters on Fire* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 2013), 70.

really do to protect against what Hillman describes elsewhere as an “Unusually warm global warming day out”?¹³

This study is about how these two seemingly incompatible things, practical instruction and inevitability, come together in British neoclassical georgic. What I have been tracing in this brief selection of post-45 American poetry — that is, a mode of insistent protest that also acknowledges its limitations against political, economic, and ecological crisis — has poetic roots in the Enlightenment. As E. P. Thompson has importantly demonstrated, protest became a central mode of discourse in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. “The stance of the common Englishman,” he writes, “was not so much democratic in any positive sense, as anti-absolutist. He felt himself to be an individualist, with few affirmative rights, but protected by the laws against the intrusion of arbitrary power.”¹⁴ On Thompson’s account, the Revolution of 1688 was thought to afford “a constitutional precedence for the right to riot in resistance to oppression,” but it was nonetheless a limited right.¹⁵ In what Thompson describes as “the central paradox of the 18th century” — “the illusion of an epoch” — the English people “claimed few rights except that of being left alone.”¹⁶ In its Augustan and often Tory iterations, georgic would seem to run directly counter to even this restricted set of rights to protest. John Dyer for instance begins Book III of his georgic of the British wool trade, *The Fleece* (1757), by attempting to calm the protestors of the 1719 and 1739 weavers riots:

Nor hence, ye Nymphs, let anger cloud your brows;
The more is wrought, the more is still required:
Blithe o’er your toils, with wonted song, proceed:
Fear not surcharge; your hands will ever find

¹³ Hillman, “Practical Water,” in *Practical Water* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 2009), 5.

¹⁴ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage, 1966), 80.

¹⁵ Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 80.

¹⁶ Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 81.

Ample employment. In the strife of trade,
These curious instruments of speed obtain
Various advantage, and the diligent
Supply with exercise, as fountains sure,
Which, ever-gliding, feed the flow'ry lawn:
Nor, should the careful State, severely kind,
In every province, to the house of toil
Compel the vagrant, and each implement
Of ruder art, the comb, the card, the wheel,
Teach their unwilling hands, nor yet complain.¹⁷

In this moment Dyer responds to riot with a new capitalist logic of mutual prosperity. He writes in the next line, “Yours, with the public good, shall ever rise, / Ever, while o’er the lawns, and airy downs / The bleating sheep and shepherd’s pipe are heard.”¹⁸ In celebrating British strength and economy, georgic seems continually to foreclose active modes of political resistance in the eighteenth century. Whereas Thompson writes of “direct popular action” that it “is possible to detect in almost every eighteenth-century crowd action some legitimizing notion,” Dyer’s poem undercuts those legitimizing notions with the very simple precept: “nor yet complain.”¹⁹ Dyer endorses the workhouse and the wool trade all within the same overriding logic of moral industry and the virtues of labor.²⁰

¹⁷ John Dyer, *The Fleece*, ed. John Goodridge and Juan Christian Pellicer (Cheltenham: The Cyder Press, 2007), III.84–100.

¹⁸ Dyer, III.101–03.

¹⁹ Thompson, *The Moral Economy of the Crowd*, in *The Essential E. P. Thompson*, ed. Dorothy Thompson (New York: The New Press, 2001), 318.

²⁰ This intersection of morality and labor appears more explicit in the work of later writers and in other contexts. William Morris begins his “Useful Work versus Useless Toil,” for instance, by noting that it has become an article of the creed of modern morality that all labour is good in itself — a convenient belief to those who live on the labour of others” (“Useful Work versus Useless Toil,” in *News from Nowhere and Other Writings*, ed. Clive Wilmer [London: Penguin, 2004], 287). Likewise, Max Weber writes of Benjamin Franklin that all of his “moral precepts” have a “utilitarian slant”: “Honesty is *useful* because it brings credit. So are punctuality, hard work, moderation, etc., and they are only virtues for this reason — . . . and any unnecessary surplus of this virtue would inevitably seem, in Franklin’s eyes, like unproductive and reprehensible profligacy” (*The Protestant Ethic and the “Spirit” of Capitalism* [New York: Penguin, 2002], 11). I will revisit these intersections of morality and use, and labor and morality, in chapter four.

In admonishing his “nymph” textile-workers to “Blithe o’er your toils, with wonted song, proceed,” Dyer appeals to a logic that’s governed many understandings of georgic poetry and the ideology of improvement: that labor and protest are fundamentally at cross-purposes. On Dyer’s account, if you’re rioting, you’re not working, and it’s always better — for you and for the nation — to stay at work. Part of the work of this project is to show that labor and protest become enmeshed in neoclassical georgic. In this respect, I offer a twist on what Ronald Paulson has called the “Art of Riot” in the eighteenth century, a term for which he offers three senses: the riot itself; the artistic representations of the riot; and the aesthetic experience of seeing riots and their representations.²¹ Crucially on Paulson’s account, riots “usually have more affect than effect (they are remembered)”: “The Gordon riots had an effect,” he writes, “burned buildings and dead rioters, but in terms of its effectiveness (repeal of Catholic Relief) none; but its affect, positive and negative, in prints, paintings, writings, and oral reports, was great.”²² In looking to georgic as a mode of political resistance, I follow Paulson’s idea of the affect of riot. But in doing so with a focus on craft labor, I am interested in a possible fourth sense of Paulson’s phrase: the skill or labor involved in protest. The “art of riot” takes up the prevalent language of the how-to manual in the eighteenth century — the art of poetry, the art of politics, the art of polite conversation — to suggest that there’s a skill to political resistance. It implies that protest and labor (affective or otherwise) need not always be mutually exclusive.

²¹ Ronald Paulson, *The Art of Riot in England and America* (Baltimore: Owlworks, 2010), 9.

²² Paulson, *The Art of Riot in England and America*, 8.

In pursuing this line of inquiry, tracing the art of protest across eighteenth-century georgic, my project adheres in part to a formalist reading practice.²³ I say only “in part” because central to the narrative of my dissertation is the way in which poets like Swift and Gay — and then novelists like Burney — begin to reject the decidedly formalist strategies of their neoclassical forebears. Over the course of the century, writers become increasingly suspicious of the central role of craft mobilized on the level of form, especially as those strategies repeatedly end up in the hands of those in power. Over time, craft began to sound more like a mode of political deception — craftiness — or like an early version of the sleights of hand that would become crucial to the development of capitalism. As a mode of poetry often taken to task for failing to accurately represent social reality, georgic is especially suited to respond to debates surrounding form both today and in the Enlightenment.²⁴ From arguments over the relation between rhyme and liberty to the religious satire underlying Hudibrastic style, poetic form and contemporary politics were intrinsically tied during the Early British Enlightenment. For many of the Tory oppositional poets studied in this project, moreover, form had become a political necessity. Following the Revolution of 1688 many neoclassical writers trod a careful line between sedition and censorship, satire and libel, and they often did so by making their claims on the level of form rather than content. Amid disappearing patronage and a

²³ Formalist method has been an important question in literary criticism over the past two decades. This project is most interested in how these issues are taken up in the eighteenth-century through writers’ approaches to craft labor. But for important statements and debates on formalist methodologies, see, for instance, Marjorie Levinson, “What is New Formalism?” *PMLA* 122.2 (2007): 558–69; Susan Wolfson, “Reading for Form” *Modern Language Quarterly* 61.1 (2000): 1–16; Caroline Levine, *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2015); and Jonathan Kramnick and Anahid Nersessian, “Form and Explanation,” *Critical Inquiry* 43.3 (Spring 2017): 650–69.

²⁴ John Barrell’s work on landscape poetry and painting has been a touchstone of this critical strain. See *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place: An Approach to the Poetry of John Clare* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010) and *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting 1730–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1980).

volatile system of laureateship, these poets adopted reticent modes and postures in order to manage newly precarious literary careers.

Poets like Dryden and Pope turned to what I will be describing as the reticent style of craftsmanship in order to evade political censorship. For these oppositional poets, the artisanal mode of “doing more though saying less” (of which more in chapter one) offered a crucial method for making seditious claims without explicitly having to state them.²⁵ This story has yet to be told with respect to the rhetoric of craft labor for a number of reasons. For one, the neoclassical poets of my project were notoriously resistant to social mobility, and formal analogies between their poetry and the humble work of artisans might violate the very social hierarchies they aimed to uphold. When it comes to studying aesthetics in the eighteenth century, moreover, critics have until recently tended to focus on aesthetic experience, from the position of the spectator, rather than on the work of artistic fabrication itself.²⁶ By reading georgic poetry through understandings of “art” in the early eighteenth-century sense of “skill or craft,” rather than of aesthetics, in terms of sensory experience, I argue that neoclassical poets took up the formal position of craft labor as a privileged mode of political opposition.

Although I maintain throughout that craft’s encounter with contingency stretches far more widely than the Restoration and eighteenth century, the central texts of this project are drawn from the tradition of neoclassical georgic verse. To tell this story, I

²⁵ The quotation is adapted from William Petty’s reputed claim to “prefer someone like Cornelius Drebbel, the Dutch inventor and Master Mechanician to James I, who had ‘done more though said less’” (P. M. Rattansi, “The Intellectual Origins of the Royal Society,” *Notes and Records: The Royal Society Journal of the History of Science* 23.2 [1968]: 130).

²⁶ Here I follow Ronald Paulson’s claim that “a great deal of theory, often brilliant, has been written in the last fifteen years on the sublime. . . . I have worked out a complementary vocabulary, one based on practice rather than theory . . . and seen from the perspective of the maker rather than the spectator” (*Breaking and Remaking: Aesthetic Practice in England, 1700–1820* [New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1989], 4).

follow many critics in treating georgic as a mode — that is, as a set of postures, affects, and attitudes — rather than a short-lived but successful genre of poetry. The most groundbreaking of these studies has been by Kevis Goodman, whose reading of georgic as affective dissonance or the “noise” of history has had a profound influence on this project. In focusing on “the paradox of georgic mediation” in works of the mid-eighteenth-century and Romantic tradition, however, Goodman leaves room for an earlier story to be told about the form and craft of georgic neoclassical poetics.²⁷ Positioned between the chaos of the English Civil War and the rise of finance, neoclassical georgic provides an especially strong locus for the struggle between craft and contingency. Less concerned with and often explicitly resistant to modes of scientific transmission, georgic and neoclassicism came to figure poetry as the fashioning and shaping of material, whether that be Virgil’s dense allusions or the artifacts and ruins of recent civil war. In their varied ways, neoclassical poets found themselves navigating the need for careful, deliberate, and unspoken skill against the tides of finance and economic contingency, as well as the chaotic fragments of past civil strife.

In tracing the posture of craft labor in neoclassical poetry, I define craftsmanship rather differently from its usual sense of mastery. Ranging from 1650 to 1750, the period of Early Enlightenment has consistently been defined as one of the most strident moments of intellectual history: no longer the “serving-maid” of theological authority, the story tends to go, philosophy “became not just emancipated but also powerful.”²⁸

²⁷ Goodman, 110. Goodman writes, “My conviction is that georgic is most influential, if less well understood, not as a relatively short-lived Augustan genre but when and where it persists as a subtle underpresence and discipline” (10). Part of the work of my project is to show that as a “short-lived Augustan genre,” georgic still isn’t that well understood at all.

²⁸ Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001), 10.

There's no shortage of evidence for this narrative. Indeed, the central terms of this project tend to evoke precisely such a confident, and masculinist, understanding of the period. Georgic continues to be read as a mode of nation-building, a sign of renewed confidence in the British Empire after civil war, and craftsmanship is widely understood to be an exercise in mastery and progress, of perfecting a skill over time. But there remains something to be said for the sense of fragility that shadows these modes amid historical pressures of rapid political and economic change. Against well-worn narratives of georgic improvement and the mastery of craft labor, this project maintains that georgic and craftsmanship share a deep commitment to and worry over their own limitations and the power of circumstances and historical forces beyond their control.

The dissertation places itself at what may seem an unlikely intersection between craft studies and the philosophy of action. Craftsmanship has experienced something of a resurgence in the fields of Art History and the History of Science, which have only recently begun attending to the often unrecorded processes of artisanal labor that were central to the scientific revolution but much less easily recovered than the well-documented prose theory of the period.²⁹ Located within traditions of “nonverbal” or “artisanal” literacies, however, craft processes rarely figure in to the stories we tell about neoclassical poetry.³⁰ By looking to the form of georgic — a mode that brokers relations between the gods above and laborers below in Virgil's middle style — this project contends that neoclassical poetics are ideally suited to a story about both craft

²⁹ See Pamela Smith, Amy Meyers, and Harold Cook, *Ways of Making and Knowing: The Material Culture of Empirical Knowledge* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2014) and Lissa Roberts, Simon Schaffer, and Peter Dear, ed., *The Mindful Hand: Inquiry and Invention from the Late Renaissance to Early Industrialization* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2008).

³⁰ For her work on the mechanical arts in seventeenth-century England, see Joanna Picciotto, *Labors of Innocence in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2010).

epistemology and the depleted agency that would at first appear antithetical to that work. Prioritizing the shaping and fashioning of material over preceptive or instrumental discourse, neoclassical poets figured their own verse as a mode of reticent artisanship, engaging the precarious work of craft labor on the level of form and action.

I have often, perhaps ironically, learned most from studies in Romanticism and ecological criticism that position themselves as responses to precisely such narratives of improvement. On these accounts, the ravenous accumulation of the Enlightenment allows for romantic writers to adopt such ethically and environmentally responsible postures as Anne-Lise François's "recessive action" and "reticent assertion" or Anahid Nersessian's "recuperative figuration of loss as an engine of utopian achievement."³¹ If my project aims to complicate the backstory of Enlightenment implied by this work, that is only because I find such ethical postures to be compelling and surprisingly familiar in the neoclassical georgics featured in my own. François's theory of recessive action has been particularly influential to the reticent modes of protest considered in the first half of the dissertation, the key difference being in the role of labor. François describes the Romantic response to the Enlightenment thus: "Put in polemical terms, this book contests the normative bias in favor of the demonstrable, dramatic development and realization of human powers characteristic of, but not limited to, the capitalist investment in value and work and the Enlightenment allegiance to rationalism and unbounded progress."³² Where for François, labor and recessive action must remain separate, my project is concerned with bringing those two things together. Put another way, while François suggests that

³¹ Anne-Lise François, *Open Secrets* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2008), 33; Anahid Nersessian, *Utopia, Limited: Romanticism and Adjustment* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2015), 5.

³² François, xvi.

her book is about poems and novels that, borrowing from Auden's account of poetry, "make nothing happen," the poets of my project take up craft labor as protest in order to make something happen, suggesting that reticent approaches to labor provide an important mode of political action.³³ As we shall see, the story to be told here is less clamorous than normative stories of mastery and improvement in the long eighteenth century or the more explicit lamentations over craft in the mid-nineteenth; the project instead traces a quieter, more fragile moment of Enlightenment concerned with loss, contingency, and ordinary crisis.

In this respect, georgic expresses a peculiar, even tragic, mode of action. Like Sandra Macpherson's "Tragic Responsibility," my study reflects on eighteenth-century literature's decoupling of action from intention, responsibility from agency; but unlike most criticism concerning action in the Enlightenment, my account does not take the novel as its primary genre.³⁴ There are many reasons why a novel organized by plot, in which characters can make and contemplate decisions, would seem a more likely place to look for the ethics of action than a largely descriptive mode of poetry. Responding to Ian Watt's foundational reading of the novel as a genre of liberal individualism, critics have demonstrated how focusing on plot, or emplotment, rather than character helps us to see people as "matter in motion," as Macpherson puts it, a proposition that, though "quite

³³ François begins her study by noting that she has been "in the habit of describing this book as a study of novels and poems in which 'nothing happens,' but it might be more accurate to say, reprising Auden's words about poetry, that they 'make nothing happen' since the phrase allows us to hear the full range of ambiguities in the idea of 'nothing' as an event made or allowed to happen" (xv).

³⁴ In her reading of Ian MacEwan's *Enduring Love*, for instance, Macpherson writes, "But his suggestion that responsibility requires intentional agency is a 'well-worn' cliché, we're told, and as the plot unfolds Joe's responsibility is insisted on as emphatically as his instrumentality" (*Harm's Way: Tragic Responsibility and the Novel Form* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2010], 11).

literally dehumanizing, . . . is not, therefore, inhumane.”³⁵ While I share this commitment to an ethics outside of liberal subjectivity, I also submit that there remains a story to be told about eighteenth-century action by looking to craft labor and the georgic mode. More precisely, my project charts the encounter with and resistance to the eighteenth-century proposition that we are just “matter in motion”; it offers something like an affective prehistory to this newfound truth of the novel.

By placing the deliberate action of craftsmanship in opposition to the growing tides of contingency and fate, georgic expresses a way of relating to the world that acknowledges but does not always accept the limits of intentional action. The British georgic tradition might in this sense be closer in tone to the “mournful line” that Willa Cather borrows as the epigraph to *My Ántonia*, “Optima dies . . . prima fugit,” or, in Jim Burden’s gloss, “in the lives of mortals, the best days are first to flee.”³⁶ If this “melancholy reflection” helps to set the tone for Cather’s Nebraska pioneer novel, it should also help us to reconfigure georgic as a mode of mourning, loss, and inevitability — a mode in which “the best days” promise no guarantee to even the hardest working mortals.³⁷ Rather than announcing itself as a mode of Enlightenment mastery and improvement, georgic articulates a posture of both backbreaking work and muted agency.

³⁵ Macpherson, 23. See also Jonathan Kramnick, *Actions and Objects from Hobbes to Richardson* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2010); Jesse Molesworth, *Chance and the Eighteenth-Century Novel: Realism, Probability, Magic* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010). Molesworth’s study has helped inform this dissertation not only for its subordination of the individual to plot, but also for his thorough account of chance as a way of severing ties between the novel and the Enlightenment.

³⁶ Willa Cather, *My Ántonia*, (New York: Dover, 1994), 126.

³⁷ Cather, 126. Goodman has already begun this work in her account, through Wordsworth, of the labor of Orpheus’s mourning in *Georgic IV*, but I would like to extend her insight that “It is easy to underestimate the pattern that consistently defines *labor* as fundamentally reparative or restitutive, precarious, and subject to realm” to the most seemingly strident works of georgic neoclassicism (113).

My argument is thus less concerned with discourses of craftsmanship as improvable science than with the way that a poetics of craftsmanship is attuned to its own fragility. This is what the implied paradox of my title is meant to refer to. The intersection of craft and contingency does not achieve the same sturdiness that an Art of Poetry or even an Art of Walking in London may promise. It maps the deliberate and practical skill implied by terms like craftsmanship or art onto external circumstances that evade individual control. It is closer, perhaps, to what Elizabeth Bishop describes in the twentieth century as the “art of losing”:

The art of losing isn’t hard to master;
So many things seem filled with the intent
To be lost that their loss is no disaster.

Lose something every day. Accept the fluster
Of lost door keys, the hour badly spent.
The art of losing isn’t hard to master.

Then practice losing farther, losing faster:
Places, and names, and where it was you meant
To travel. None of these will bring disaster.³⁸

Taking up the tradition of art as skill, *One Art* (1979) ascribes aptitude to absent-mindedness. With its strained imperatives — “Lose something every day. Accept the fluster . . .” — the poem explores the limits of deliberate action within a domestic space whose objects, rather than its agents, “seem filled with intent.” This world is familiar to British georgic. It’s a world in which skill is found in animated and external circumstance. It is also an ordinary one — as Bishop repeats throughout the poem, “None of these will bring disaster.” Georgic isn’t interested in anything quite like disaster or catastrophe. Rather, I shall argue, it demonstrates how the ceaseless work of everyday

³⁸ Elizabeth Bishop, *One Art*, in *Geography III* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2008), page 40.

labor, or the losing of one's keys, can evoke the same affective postures as civil war, political revolution, and financial crisis; it shows the effects of historical and domestic pressures experienced as the hard limit of individual action. *Trade Secrets* aims to suggest that early on in the eighteenth century, at a time just before the rise of industrial capital, all matters of art had indeed become very hard to master.

The struggle between skill and chance was perhaps most strongly felt in the political sphere of British Republicanism. As J. G. A. Pocock has influentially defined it, “civic humanism” tested the hypothesis that people were capable of making good decisions within a democracy: “If the individual as citizen should fail to master time through participation in political decision, he would find himself in the world of time neither understood, legitimised nor controlled. The failure of the republic was the triumph of Fortune.”³⁹ This worldview owes much to the Machiavellian poles of *virtù* and *fortuna* within the tradition of Renaissance Florence where, Pocock notes, “there was considerable interchange between the vocabulary of this philosophical problem and that of citizens striving to understand and manage an increasingly unmanageable world.”⁴⁰ Dwelling within the realm of the georgic ordinary, this project also considers this porous boundary between the republic (*polis*) and the household (*oikos*); it examines how increasing political complexity was felt in the poetry of the everyday. On the level of contemporary British politics, these poles of *virtù* and *fortuna*, skill and chance, were

³⁹ J. G. A. Pocock, “Civic Humanism and Its Role in Anglo-American Thought,” in *Politics, Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1989), 86.

⁴⁰ Pocock, 86.

most often used to critique the new financially driven politics of Prime Minister Walpole, but this was more than a matter of reactionary nostalgia.⁴¹ I aim to demonstrate how georgic keeps pace with history by engaging both sides of this divide, by embracing the careful work of craftsmanship alongside the new modes of contingency that arise from rapidly changing political economies.

Neoclassical writers would have been familiar with this division between virtue and fortune, or what I'm describing within the terms of this project as craft and contingency, even beyond the specific political context of British Republicanism. Translated by Dryden in 1683, Plutarch's *Life of Pericles* begins with a defense of his choice of biographical subject matter by appealing precisely to this difference between virtue and fortune:

But virtue, by the bare statement of its actions, can so affect men's minds as to create at once both admiration of the things done and desire to imitate the doers of them. The goods of fortune we would possess and would enjoy; those of virtue we long to practice and exercise: we are content to receive the former from others, the latter we wish others to experience from us. Moral good is a practical stimulus; it is no sooner seen, than it inspires an impulse to practice, and influences the mind and character not by a mere imitation which we look at, but by the statement of the fact creates a moral purpose which we form.⁴²

Whereas fortune is merely possessed, virtue spurs us to action; it's something "we long to practice and exercise." By tying the moral good to "practice and exercise," Plutarch lays a key logical foundation for many georgic poets: one in which virtue and craft (*virtù*) come together in practice and experience. Indeed, this logic is fairly common to

⁴¹ See Isaac Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle: The Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1968).

⁴² Plutarch, *Life of Pericles*, in *Plutarch's Lives*, 2 vol., trans. John Dryden, ed. Arthur Hugh Clough (New York: Random House, 2001), 1:202. See Paddy Bullard, "The Scriblerian Mock-Arts: Pseudo-Technical Satire in Swift and His Contemporaries" *Studies in Philology* 110.3 (2013): 620.

eighteenth-century literary history. In a quotation to which I will return in the second half of the dissertation, Fielding proclaims that “Life may as properly be called an art as any other; and the great incidents in it are no more to be considered as mere accidents, than the several members of a fine statue, or a noble poem.”⁴³ On Fielding’s account a well-lived life and a well-run government are careful to bracket out fortune, leaving nothing to chance: “so by observing minutely the several incidents which tend to the catastrophe or completion of the whole, and the minute causes whence those incidents are produced, we shall best be instructed in this most useful of all arts which I call the ART OF LIFE.”⁴⁴ Here and elsewhere in the British Enlightenment, craft and deliberate modes of action become the models for virtue.

One need not look far to find the ethical consequences of a world run by chance. In her Florentine Renaissance novel *Romola*, George Eliot provides a negative counterpart to Fielding’s “Art of Life” in the calculating figure of Tito, for whom “life was taking more and more decidedly . . . the aspect of a game in which there was an agreeable mingling of skill and chance.”⁴⁵ Whereas Fielding’s narrator demands that one take responsibility for all matters of action, that one look at life’s circumstances as a deliberately crafted work of art, Tito soon finds life to be “so complicated a game that the devices of skill were liable to be defeated at every turn by air-blown chances, incalculable as the descent of thistle-down.”⁴⁶ Enlightenment philosophy was quite attuned to the risk involved in such a revelation. Whether in the context of increasing political complexity or in relation to debates of free will and determinism, the failure of

⁴³ Henry Fielding, *Amelia*, ed. David Blewett (New York: Penguin, 1987), 14.

⁴⁴ Fielding, 14.

⁴⁵ George Eliot, *Romola*, ed. Dorothea Barrett (New York: Penguin, 2005), 312.

⁴⁶ Eliot, 407.

skill against circumstance risked serving as an alibi for immoral action.⁴⁷ In Pope's famous description of "The mind's disease, its ruling passion," one sees how a world driven by circumstances beyond one's control could provide precisely such justification: "A mightier power the strong direction sends, / And several men impels to several ends: / Like varying winds, by other passions tossed, / This drives them constant to a certain coast."⁴⁸ Like Tito's "air-blown chances" — or perhaps even like Slavitt's air-blown farmers — Pope's ruling passion ascribes power and responsibility to the "varying winds." One could see why the most calculating and villainous characters of Enlightenment realism are often the most willing to cede control: we might think of Fielding's own Captain Booth in *Amelia* or of the conniving Monckton in Frances Burney's *Cecilia* who maintains that when "he mixes with the world, . . . [the closest reasoner] soon finds the necessity of accommodating himself to such customs as are already received, and of pursuing quietly the track that is already marked out."⁴⁹ The eighteenth century is haunted by these figures who take self-interest as an external cause.⁵⁰

This would seem to be the overwhelming logic of georgic poetry. Laboring against the ruling passion both georgic and careful craft labor would appear ideally suited to exemplify such *virtù*. But as the narrative of my dissertation progresses, writers

⁴⁷ For the philosophical context surrounding these debates see Kramnick, *Actions and Objects*, 4–6. Compatibilism, the early Enlightenment notion that free will was not in fact incompatible with necessity, was crucial to such British philosophers as Hobbes, Locke, and Hume.

⁴⁸ Alexander Pope, *Essay on Man*, in *The Poems of Alexander Pope* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1966), epistle II, lines 162–69.

⁴⁹ Frances Burney, *Cecilia* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2008), 14. As David Blewett writes in the introduction to *Amelia*, "Booth is an intellectual drifter who has taken up the popular notion of the predominant passion and uses it to excuse his own lapses of behavior" (xii).

⁵⁰ For more on these questions in the context of the rise of capitalism, see Albert Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism Before Its Triumph* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1997).

become increasingly dissatisfied with such a model. In this respect, the figure of the shipwreck holds a perhaps surprisingly prominent place in a project that takes as its central object “the poetry of the earth.”⁵¹ As I will examine further in chapter three, even in its earliest iterations, georgic was not simply restrained to the land but took up that riskier world of the sea.⁵² This would become especially important in the eighteenth century when debates over land and money and the development of early capital all became tied to figures of the sea. Indeed, Hesiod’s *Works and Days* provides one crucial early georgic context for this question when he admonishes his brother Perses against the rise of commercial seafaring by turning to the language of probability and chance. In describing the “time for mortals to sail,” Hesiod’s speaker claims, “You are not likely to smash your ship, nor the sea to destroy the crew, unless it be that of set mind Poseidon the earth-shaker or Zeus king of the immortals wants to destroy them, for in their hands lies the outcome of good and bad things alike.”⁵³ In contrast to the resounding, preceptive voice of georgic didacticism, the passage is steeped in the language of worry and risk: “Then without anxiety, trusting the winds, drag your swift ship into the sea and put all the cargo aboard. But make haste to come home again as quickly as you can.”⁵⁴ Shifting between the discourses of landed labor and seafaring, craft and contingency, Hesiod anticipates later concerns about an “increasingly unmanageable world.”

⁵¹ Margaret Ronda writes for instance, “Georgic derives from the Greek terms for ‘earth’ or ‘field’ and ‘work,’ and georgic poetry attends to manual and particularly agricultural labor, taking the laborer as its central protagonist” (“‘Work and Wait Unwearying’: Dunbar’s Georgics,” *PMLA* 127.4 [2012]: 864). Ronda’s work on “georgic disenchantment” in the American tradition has been greatly influential to my project, especially for her account of “labor’s tragic, nonredemptive nature” in Dunbar’s poetry (864).

⁵² On risk see, Emily Nacol, *An Age of Risk: Politics and Economy in Early Modern Britain* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2016). On contingency, see Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989).

⁵³ Hesiod, *Works and Days*, trans. M. L. West (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), 56–57.

⁵⁴ Hesiod, 56–57.

Even on its ostensibly sturdier ground, georgic is haunted by such contingent forces. Hans Blumenberg has helped to demonstrate how across the history of philosophy the uncertain figure of shipwreck projects solidity and security onto *terra firma*, but georgic does considerable work in collapsing that divide.⁵⁵ Consider the following poem written in honor of James Gardiner's translation of René Rapin's Latin georgic *Of Gardens*. After celebrating Gardiner's skill in transplanting Rapin's work from foreign to English soil, the poet recommends:

Grieve not that Flow'rs, a short-liv'd Race, your Care
Submit to Fate, and Winter's Fury fear;
Their annual Pride they lose, nor Art can save
What Spring had promis'd and what Summer gave.⁵⁶

Like the objects that seem “filled with intention” in *One Art*, the force of georgic seasons, of “Winter's Fury” or Spring's promises, has a way of resisting even the most reliable and practiced mastery. The inadequacy of art to combat fate was a running worry throughout the georgic Enlightenment — as we shall see, the imperative “Submit to Fate,” was a common trope of eighteenth-century economic journalism. Another dedication to Rapin describes a world in which “Fountains too, with lofty Statues gay, / Thro' which (for Nature's self must Art obey) / Th'unwilling Streams by Force are bid to play.”⁵⁷ In its passive removal of georgic's laboring subject, in the “unwilling Streams,” and the ambiguated relation of obedience between “Nature's self” and “Art,” georgic cultivates something like a world “filled with intention”; it sets the stage for limited

⁵⁵ See Hans Blumenberg, *Shipwreck with Spectator: Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997).

⁵⁶ “To my Friend the Translator of *Rapin's Poem of Gardens*,” in James Gardiner, trans., *Rapin of Gardens: A Latin Poem* (London, 1728), xxxvii.

⁵⁷ John Disney, “*FLORA*, In Admiration of the Gardens of Rapin, and the Translation of Mr. Gardiner,” in *Rapin*, xxxv.

action and precarious labor.⁵⁸ Stephen Duck, the eighteenth century's famous "thresher poet," would transform this endless and inevitable turn of the seasons into an expression of exploitative and repetitive labor, "To sing the Toils of each revolving Year; / Those endless Toils, which always grow anew, / And the poor Thresher's destin'd to pursue":

Thus as the Year's revolving course goes round,
No respite from our Labour can be found.
Like Sisyphus, our Work is never done;
Continually rolls back the restless Stone.
Now growing Labours still succeed the past,
And growing always new, must always last.⁵⁹

Duck's powerful depiction of exploitative labor is less a realistic representation of agricultural toil than a poetic account of georgic contingency put into practice. The force of his verse lies in the poet's ability to map fate and the georgic trope of the seasons' revolving course onto an inescapable and unrelenting world of hard labor.

Georgic is unlikely to satisfy readers looking for realistic representations of agricultural labor on the level of content.⁶⁰ Indeed, it's worth remembering along with classicists that Virgil's *Georgics* are exceptional within the poet's oeuvre for the dense number of allusions, most often referring to the gods — those forces who like the seasons

⁵⁸ In her recent work on georgic, Courtney Weiss-Smith has read such moments in relation to the current "new materialisms" as examples of how "nature was neither as pliable and subordinate nor as hostile and total as [modern caricatures of nature] would suggest" (*Empiricist Devotions: Science, Religion, and Poetry in Early Eighteenth-Century England* [Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 2016], 21). In looking instead to the perspective of the artisan, I hope to complicate such accounts of georgic's environment.

⁵⁹ Stephen Duck, *The Thresher's Labour*, ed. E. P. Thompson & Marian Sugden (London: Merlin Press, 1989), page 1, 12.

⁶⁰ As I note above, John Barrell's work in *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Landscape Painting, 1730–1840* and *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place, 1730–1840* has been crucial to such critical demands. But these debates stretch back much further to contemporary poets like George Crabbe, who asks: "What forms the real picture of the poor, / Demands a song — the Muse can give no more" (George Crabbe, *The Village: A Poem in Two Books* [London, 1783], lines 5–6). Kevis Goodman has offered a crucial revision to georgic criticism that has "worked like Marx's and Engels's famous *camera obscura* of ideology" by asking how "georgic *versus* in some instances 'work' as agents of disclosure in ways we have not been able to recognize, even as they attempt ideological closure in ways that we have?" (*Georgic Modernity*, 3).

play a central role in both Hesiod and Virgil's poetry of the earth.⁶¹ Looming over the British georgic tradition is a sense of tragic, depleted agency, a quiet awareness of the limitations to one's actions. Like Perses at sea, even as one works carefully and deliberately, one must trust to the gods or to the winds.

The argument of the dissertation will proceed, roughly, in three stages. The first part (chapters one and two) will establish an artisanal style of poetry in neoclassical georgic by reading rhetorical devices like zeugma, anaphora, and chiasmus against scientific revolution and political economic change. In the second part, I read Swift's anti-representational poetics, as well as his and John Gay's mock georgic verse, as responses to financial crisis that also anticipate later georgics of industrial labor. The study ends with an extended coda, which examines the relation between art and accident in Burney's novels and sets her approach to the ethics of the novel as the limit case for older modes of craft as virtue.

"Dryden's Georgic Fictionality" establishes the form and politics of georgic reticence by recasting the mode in relation to the Royal Society's History of Trades Project. In this first chapter, I continue the work of defining poetic art in terms of skill which I began in this introduction. Whereas georgic's status as how-to manual in verse has led critics both then and now to ascribe to the poetry similar goals to those natural philosophers who aimed to collect and disseminate secret processes for crafts like

⁶¹ See Joseph Farrell, *Vergil's Georgics and the Traditions of Ancient Epic: The Art of Allusion in Literary History* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1991) and Heinzelman, "The Last Georgic: *Wealth of Nations* and the Scene of Writing," in *Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations: New Interdisciplinary Essays*, ed. Stephen Copley and Kathryn Sutherland (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1995), 192.

metallurgy, glass-making, wine-making, and so forth, I argue that John Dryden's 1697 translation of Virgil's *Georgics* aspires to something like the opposite effect. Here, Dryden's use of the zeugma (from the Greek "to yoke together") offers one key instance of how georgic labor is formally enacted rather than delivered as precept in neoclassical poetry. Instead of "speaking for" the ploughman, as many contemporary accounts of georgic would have it, Dryden places himself alongside georgic laborers to make a case for the specialized techniques — of craftsmen and poets alike — which are less easily recovered by written theories. Not only resistant to the growing commodification of art, Dryden's translation also invokes reticent craft poetics as a political necessity. Having lost the Laureateship after the Revolution of 1688, Dryden relies on a tacit mode of poetry in order to critique William III's reign while evading widespread censorship. Along the way, the chapter recovers a common history of georgic and fictionality that resides in their shared attention to craft labor. This tradition of craft poetics helps reveal an overlooked genealogy for fiction at midcentury both in terms of its etymological origins as material craftsmanship and, strategically, as a tacit mode of political dissent.

My second chapter, "Pope's Chiastic Optimism," posits craft as one explanation for a paradox of Pope's late aesthetics: that some of his most radical political statements are made in moderate, and even complacent poetic forms. Reading his georgic verse alongside the anti-Walpolean journal *The Craftsman* — to which Pope, Swift, and Gay all contributed — I argue that Pope mobilizes skill as a key trope of political opposition. An inveterate craftsman of such poetic forms of antithesis as the couplet and chiasmus, Pope develops an artisanal poetics that seems to efface the labor behind his art in order to level a quiet critique of Prime Minister Walpole's statecraft — often depicted as the work of a

failed manager or steward of the state. Whereas Pope's georgics have consistently been charged with quietism and unwavering retreat, this politicized account of his poetic sprezzatura allows for an alternate view. The chapter recovers crucial statements about labor underlying Pope's deist optimism to demonstrate that he is skeptical of both new moneyed politics and established landed economies. Taking his formal craft labor and painstaking relationship to the book trade as central examples, I argue that Pope's georgic poetry casts poetic skill as a rival to Walpole's failed management in such seemingly quietist statements as "whate'er is best administer'd is best."⁶² Such unassuming lines as this insist on placing pressure on both the contemporary terms of political economy and the so-called political craftsmen who have succeeded in securing power.

Chapter three, "Swift, Anti-Formalism, and The Georgics of the South Sea," changes course for the unlikely georgic setting of the sea. I recover an overlooked tradition of shipwreck and seafaring present in the early georgics of Hesiod and Virgil and then later in Swift's ephemeral poetry of the South Sea Bubble. Swift offers a key voice of suspicion against the politics of craftsmanship — or, as he would have it, "the art of political lying" — and this suspicion is nowhere clearer than in what I describe as the anti-formalism of his poetry.⁶³ Consistently foregrounding the pain and labor necessary to his verse, Swift refers to his poetry as no more than a "Pile of scatter'd Rhymes," and most readers have tended to agree.⁶⁴ But against the tradition of craftsmanship described in my earlier chapters, Swift's doggerel verse can be taken as something of a sharp

⁶² Pope, *An Essay on Man*, in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, epistle III, line 304.

⁶³ Swift, *Examiner*, no. 14, 9 November 1710, in *The Examiner and Other Pieces Written in 1710–11*, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), 9.

⁶⁴ Swift, "To Stella, who collected and transcribed his Poems," in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, line 5.

riposte. The critique is perhaps sharpest in his poetry on the South Sea Bubble, which embraces the contingency of the sea against careful craft labor and takes the flimsy occasional broadside as its medium rather than the sturdier, expensively bound editions of his forebears. The chapter makes an argument for georgic's importance to historians and theorists of political economy by submitting that the poetry of the South Sea Crisis expressed anxieties less over the role of chance or "mania," as critics often assume, than over how finance introduced a new skill for speculative malfeasance, one that actively propelled — rather than randomly resulted in — uneven economic distribution.

The limits of craft labor are most vividly expressed by the subject of my last chapter, "Mock Georgic and the *Trivia* of Industry," which sets the mock georgic poetry of John Gay and his contemporaries in the context of Britain's incipient consumer society. I argue that the pervasive eighteenth-century concept of "trivia" owes a debt to Virgil's influential formulation to introduce his account of the bees in *Georgics* IV: "si parva licet componere magnis" (in Dryden, "If little things with great we may compare").⁶⁵ Such scalar comparison not only serves as a basic structure for poetic satire in the period — from Pope's "trivial things" in the *Rape of the Lock* to Swift and Gay's ironic urban iterations of georgic — but also marks a historical shift in notions of craftsmanship.⁶⁶ Often describing their poetry as no more than "mere trifles," these writers anticipate the increasing industrial craftwork of small "trivial" materials like the Birmingham toy industry, which produced small metal, leather, and glass objects at a large scale and helped pave the way for factory production at the end of the century. As

⁶⁵ Virgil, *The Georgics*, in *The Georgics of Virgil: Bilingual Edition*, trans. David Ferry (29 BCE; New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), page 154; Dryden, *Georgics*, book IV, line 256.

⁶⁶ Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, canto 1, line 2.

the toy industry serves as the subject for what critics call the last “true georgic” of the period, Richard Jago’s *Edge-Hill*, I argue that these changing notions of material craftsmanship also contribute to the poetic mode’s ostensible demise.

The study concludes by considering how Burney’s long, diffuse works of fiction develop an ethics of accident within the history of the novel. Whereas critics from the eighteenth century to today have privileged “art” — in the sense of careful, deliberate skill and conduct, that is, as craftsmanship — as a crucial marker of human character, Burney insists on filling her novels with a series of unexpected events and a multitude of characters surprised by their own actions. By refusing to treat accident as a mistake to be improved upon — in the realm of either characterological conduct or authorial craft — Burney posits an ethics of the novel that treats matters of chance and modes of depleted agency as a central aspect of the human condition rather than a moral or aesthetic failure. Setting Burney’s texts within shifts in modes of economy and finance, the coda suggests that this marks a key change within the rise of the novel that continues well into late capitalism.

If this project tells a story about historical change and loss in the Enlightenment, it is an ongoing one. David Lynch helps to suggest as much in his cult television series *Twin Peaks* (1990–91) when Big Ed, the local gas station owner, laments feeling at least in part responsible for his wife’s attempt to commit suicide after the rejection of her silent-drape-runner invention: “I never believed in fate, Agent Cooper. I always felt you make your own way, you take care of your own, you pick up after yourself.” With his

characteristic cynicism, special agent Albert Rosenfeld responds: “Farmer’s Almanac?”⁶⁷ For Lynch, and for the eighteenth century, there is something delightfully anachronistic about the conviction that hard work reliably reaps just rewards; and to a self-identified cosmopolitan like Albert Rosenfeld, Big Ed’s assumption of ownership for his life’s circumstances could be equated with attempts to control the seasons or contain the weather. This is of course what Agent Dale Cooper finds so charming about the “bucolic hideaway.” As he admonishes to Albert later on, this unmitigated sense of responsibility exemplifies “a way of living I thought had vanished from the earth but it hasn’t Albert. It’s right here in Twin Peaks.”⁶⁸

Rosenfeld’s somewhat bad-faith response to Ed helps to articulate a contextual pressure felt by many of the neoclassical georgics I study here, but perhaps more importantly by the narratives of modernity that we continue to tell. Such untimely encounters had become rather common in the eighteenth century when, as Raymond Williams famously suggests in *The Country and the City*, labor in the countryside always feels somehow left in the past.⁶⁹ In a charge that has had profound effects on the history of georgic criticism, Williams describes the contrast between rural innocence and urban experience as “an ideological separation between the processes of rural exploitation, which have been, in effect, dissolved into a landscape, and the register of that exploitation, in the law courts, the money markets, the political power and the conscious expenditure of the city.”⁷⁰ Hesiod’s Golden Age of reliable agricultural labor at risk of

⁶⁷ *Twin Peaks*, dir. David Lynch, (ABC, 1990), season 2, episode 1: “May the Giant be with You.”

⁶⁸ *Twin Peaks*, season 1, episode 4: “Rest in Pain.”

⁶⁹ See the chapter on “Golden Ages” in Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1975), 36–45.

⁷⁰ Williams, *The Country and the City*, 46.

“vanish[ing] from the earth” played a central role in eighteenth-century politics and aesthetics. From Bolingbroke’s conception of the Anti-Walpole journal *The Craftsman* at his retirement estate, Dawley Farm — a place reportedly well-furnished with georgic paintings of agrarian labor — to Henry Fielding’s depiction of farming as the safe and uneventful alternative to gambling in *Amelia*, agricultural labor played a central, if mercurial role in the British political imaginary.⁷¹ Against the interwoven threats of financial contingency and political corruption, writers across party lines obscured the pain and exploitation of ostensibly outmoded versions of labor as a strategic contrast to ascendant political economies.

Despite recent critical efforts to push against this narrative in later georgics, what Williams refers to as “a problem of perspective” more often tied to pastoral continues to define some of our most basic understandings of the georgic mode, especially in the tradition of neoclassical and Tory oppositional poetics. Where these early British georgics should be delivering honest representations of agricultural labor, the story tends to go, they instead celebrate or elide agrarian toil. I give two reasons (one formal, one political) why these narratives of mistaken rural innocence remain so compelling. Peculiar for its “burden of referentiality,” georgic verse is supposed to act as a vehicle through which to transmit precepts for agricultural labor.⁷² This is what many critics have meant by the term “georgic realism”: a realistic representation of agricultural labor in the resounding, didactic voice of the poet.⁷³ Although recent work in the novel has helped to

⁷¹ On Dawley Farm, see Brean Hammond, *Pope and Bolingbroke: A Study of Friendship and Influence* (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1984); on gambling in *Amelia*, see Molesworth, 178.

⁷² Heinzelman, “Roman Georgic in a Georgian Age,” 182–214.

⁷³ See Courtney Weiss-Smith, *Empiricist Devotions: Science, Religion, and Poetry in Early Eighteenth-Century England*, 19, 31, 173–210 and Anthony Low, *The Georgic Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2014), 20, 22–23, 29, 231–32.

disabuse critics of the notion that realism in the eighteenth century was synonymous with verisimilitude, the demand for “real” accounts of farm labor continues to trouble readers of georgic.⁷⁴ As we shall soon see, the Augustan poets of my study transformed georgic into an oblique, inexplicit mode, making such demands difficult to meet. Politically, Williams’s escalator effect seems practically made for the reactionary nostalgia of Tory neoclassical poetry. If we follow Kurt Heinzelman in assuming that georgic was a physiocratic mode arguing for land-based economies against new moneyed classes, the idealization of rural toil seems a next logical step.⁷⁵ Pretty soon these early georgic poets begin to look a lot like Agent Cooper celebrating an almost-“vanished,” “bucolic hideaway” in contrast to newer, hard-bitten modes of cynicism and corruption.

This project articulates a posture or attitude that is felt especially strongly in the long eighteenth century, when discourses of craft labor became obsessed with their own precarity amid rapid scientific developments, financial revolution, and the imminent threat of industrialization but which has its roots in Hesiod and continues to be felt today. It is a posture that Freud once diagnosed as one of our anxious civilization’s techniques for avoiding suffering:

Here the task is to displace the aims of the drives in such a way that they cannot be frustrated by the external world. Sublimation of the drives plays a part in this. We achieve most if we can sufficiently heighten the pleasure derived from mental and intellectual work. Fate can then do little to harm us. This kind of satisfaction — the artist’s joy in creating, in fashioning forth the products of his imagination, or the scientist’s in solving problems and discovering truths — has a special quality that it will

⁷⁴ Molesworth distinguishes realism, the “textual interface seeking to diminish the boundary between audience and text,” from verisimilitude, the capacity of narrative “to offer a mimetic representation of ordinary life” (14).

⁷⁵ Heinzelman, “Roman Georgic in a Georgian Age,” 192.

undoubtedly be possible, one day, to describe in metapsychological terms.⁷⁶

Art, for Freud one of the strongest iterations of what he calls “special aptitudes,” seems repeatedly to offer itself up as protection against the pain involved in suffering and contingency. Much like Pope’s use of the term as a prosthetic in *An Essay on Man*, “Alas what wonder! Man’s superior part / Unchecked may rise, and climb from art to art,” art continues to be cast as a stronghold against the tides of fortune.⁷⁷ And yet, as Freud goes on to suggest, there are limits to art’s palliative effects: “Even to the few it cannot afford complete protection against suffering; it does not supply them with an armour that is proof against the slings and arrows of fortune.”⁷⁸ Part of the human condition inheres in this anxious and inescapable sense that phenomena of chance, fortune, and contingency inevitably have a way of overwhelming the relation between action and intention.

The British georgics studied here do not simply tell a triumphant story of hard work rewarded but rather lament the perils of precarious labor. To recall the figure of the shipwreck, they share a similarly gloomy sense of inevitability to that of Blumenberg’s anecdote from Ernst Jünger’s late diary: “‘Formerly [*Früher*], many sailors didn’t want to learn to swim,’ . . . they had ‘their reasons for this.’”⁷⁹ Though those reasons are omitted,

⁷⁶ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* (New York: Penguin, 2004), 21.

⁷⁷ Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man*, in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, II.39–41.

⁷⁸ Freud, 21.

⁷⁹ It’s worth noting here that my use of the term “inevitability” throughout this introduction and the larger project is meant not to refer to larger political economic structures like those of capitalism but rather to the more individual mood of feeling helpless against larger contingent forces. In other words, the paradoxical relation that I trace here is supposed to do the opposite work of what Ellen Meiksins Wood has described as those “old models of capitalist development” which espoused a “paradoxical blend of transhistorical determinism and ‘free’ market voluntarism, in which the capitalist market was both an immutable natural law and the perfection of choice and freedom” (*The Origin of Capitalism: A Longer View* [London: Verso, 2002], 34). Rather, in focusing on craft labor, I aspire to narrate the “antithesis of such models,” on Wood’s account: “a conception of the capitalist market that fully acknowledges its imperatives and compulsions, while recognizing that these imperatives are rooted not in some transhistorical natural law but in historically specific social relations, constituted by human agency and subject to change” (34). This is meant to offer an important revision to the usual stories told about the financial revolution in eighteenth-

Blumenberg offers his own conjecture that “whoever could swim increased the chance of rescue after a shipwreck only slightly — but in an acknowledged misrelation to the risk of extending the hopeless battle for a forfeited life.”⁸⁰ Georgic projects nothing like this disaster, but the wagering of skill against its own limitations, that potentially hopeless logic of shipwreck, still rings out across georgic neoclassicism. In the realm of precarious and contingent labor, skill might look something closer to Samuel Johnson’s account of Xerxes in *The Vanity of Human Wishes*: “The waves he lashes, and enchains the Wind.”⁸¹

century England, in which developments in mathematics and physics instilled an optimism that similar laws could be discovered and developed with respect to the economy. The key historian of this account is P. G. M. Dickson; see *The Financial Revolution in England: A Study in the Development of Public Credit, 1688–1756* (London: Macmillan, 1967).

⁸⁰ Blumenberg, *Care Crosses the River*, ed. Werner Hamacher, trans. Paul Fleming (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2010), 15.

⁸¹ Samuel Johnson, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, in *Samuel Johnson: The Major Works* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008), line 232.

Chapter 1: Dryden's Georgic Fictionality

Georgic offers a peculiar — perhaps even oxymoronic — case for the history of fiction. Unique in its tendency to court the “burden of referentiality,” georgic verse can be understood in its most basic sense as a vehicle through which to transmit precepts for agricultural labor.¹ Although recent work has helped to redress longstanding complaints about georgic's inability to accurately represent physical labor, the burden of reference remains central to definitions of the mode.² Taking as a point of departure Joseph Addison's influential definition, in which “the Precepts of Husbandry are not to be deliver'd with the simplicity of a Plow-Man, but with the Address of a Poet,” critics have defined georgic in terms of scientific transmission: as a nascent version of the scientific prose treatise, as a precursor to statistical graphs, or instrumentally as a lens or “artificial organ.”³ Georgic, this story seems to suggest, would hold very little in common with “fictionality,” that is, in Dorrit Cohn's influential formulation, “nonreferential narrative.”⁴ Engaging with the outside world not despite but because of its characteristic nonreferentiality, or, as Catherine Gallagher has put it, “suspend[ing], deflect[ing], or otherwise disabl[ing] normal referential truth claims about the world of ordinary

¹ Kurt Heinzelman, “Roman Georgic in the Georgian Age: A Theory of Romantic Genre,” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 33.2 (1991): 192.

² On georgic's failure to represent labor, see John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Landscape Painting, 1730–1840* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press), 1980. Kevis Goodman addresses these issues in *Georgic Modernity and British Romanticism: Poetry and the Mediation of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004), 22–29.

³ Joseph Addison, *An Essay on the Georgics*, in *The Works of John Dryden*, 20 vol., ed. William Frost (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1987), 5:145; Rachel Crawford, *Poetry, Enclosure, and the Vernacular Landscape, 1700–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), 92–93; Frans de Bruyn, “From Georgic Poetry to Statistics and Graphs: Eighteenth-Century Representations and the ‘State’ of British Society,” *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 17.1 (2004): 115; Goodman, 22–29.

⁴ Dorrit Cohn, *The Distinction of Fiction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1999), 9–17.

experience,” fiction should seem rather antithetical to the georgic “delivery” of precepts on which Addison and critics after him have focused.⁵

In examining such demands for georgic transmission, whether of scientific knowledge or of everyday experience, critics have overlooked a crucial, if perhaps quieter story of fictionality in the poetic mode’s heightened attention to craft. With its etymological origins as *fingēre*, “to fashion or form,” *fiction* participates in a tradition of craftsmanship that during the first half of the eighteenth century was central to the art of georgic.⁶ From Dryden’s account of “Handy-crafts and Arts” in his landmark translation of Virgil’s *Georgics* (1697), to Christopher Smart’s *The Hop-Garden* (1752), which describes the techniques for making beer, to John Gay’s *Trivia: Or, the Art of Walking the Streets in London* (1716), a series of anxious and parodic precepts for navigating the fast-developing urban landscape (of which more in my fourth chapter), georgic engages the skills and techniques necessary to a variety of crafts beyond husbandry.⁷ The similarly ubiquitous *Ars Poetica* across the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries attest further to an early sense of poetry as craft labor. As we shall soon see, georgic’s engagement with craftsmanship is not always represented as content but rather occurs more often on the level of form as part of that other important georgic labor: poetic making. By looking to the form rather than the content of georgic poetry, I will argue, we can begin to recover an alternate history of fiction as a mode of invention or making —

⁵ Catherine Gallagher, “The Rise of Fictionality,” in *The Novel*, 2 vol. ed. Franco Moretti (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2006), 1:338. See also Henrik Nielson, James Phelan, and Richard Walsh, “Ten Theses about Fictionality,” *Narrative* 23.1 (2015): 61–73 and Richard Walsh, *The Rhetoric of Fictionality: Narrative Theory and the Idea of Fiction* (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 2007).

⁶ *OED*, s.v. “fiction, *n.*”

⁷ John Dryden, *The Georgics*, in *The Works of John Dryden*, 5:book 1, line 189. Hereafter cited parenthetically by book and line number.

one that holds an important place in the social history of literature at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

As much as craft pervaded the poetic discourses of the period, writers were also obsessed with the sense of precariousness that accompanied it. While Britain's consumer revolution could be said to have gained greatest momentum at midcentury, social historians have located its intellectual origins in the 1690s when political economists began to acknowledge the importance of acquiring goods beyond one's most basic necessities as a valuable aspect of trade.⁸ This corresponded to an accompanying shift in production. Where the products of craftsmanship had once been reserved for the very wealthy, and made only by master craftsmen, the end of the seventeenth century saw new initiatives designed to propagate the specialized techniques of craft labor. Here, we can begin to see parallels in the production of poetry. Where artisanal laborers suffered from the wider circulation of their specialized techniques, poets found their own art to be under siege with the increasing commodification of literary artifacts. With the growing number of laboring poets, the rise of the book trade, and the move from patronage to print, a concern that anyone could become a poet hovered over the first half of the period.⁹ These developments were met with profound anxieties about social mobility. At the same time, however, these shifts allowed neoclassical poets more often known for their reactionary elitism to make some surprising alignments across the very class hierarchies they aimed to uphold. By turning to the ethics and aesthetics of craft labor, poets like Dryden sought

⁸ Neil McKendrick, "The Consumer Revolution of Eighteenth-Century England," in *The Birth of the Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb (London: Europa Publications Limited, 1982), 13.

⁹ See William Christmas, *The Lab'ring Muses: Work, Writing, and the Social Order in English Plebeian Poetry, 1730–1830* (Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 2001).

to prove the value of their own specialized poetic labors amid rapid social and political change.

I define craft in two distinct though related senses: first, as a specialized set of techniques for artisanal fabrication, that is, for the shaping of matter, and second, in the formal register, as “art” in the early eighteenth-century sense of “skill” rather than aesthetic experience. This focus on craft as poetic making offers a departure from major critical tendencies, not only with respect to georgic but in the field of eighteenth-century studies more generally, which continues to focus on aesthetic traditions of sensory experience. For Kevis Goodman on georgic, for Michael McKeon on the origins of the aesthetic, for Ian Watt on the novel, eighteenth-century literature is best understood through the aesthetic imagination’s inheritance of empirical modes of understanding.¹⁰ In attending to the ways of knowing and experiencing aesthetic objects, however, critics have yet to fully address a tradition of craft poetics often at odds with the goals of Royal Society transmission. In what follows, I shall introduce one such version of craft poetics in the language of early modern artisanal manuals and Dryden’s translation of Virgil. Following in the work of such poetic manuals as George Puttenham’s *Art of English Poesie* (1589), Dryden deploys rhetorical figures like zeugma and anaphora to cast his own poetic labors as material craftsmanship — a mode, I will suggest, that replaces georgic referentiality with strategic reticence. While it has become commonplace to read Dryden’s late-career translations as much more than simply “journeyman’s work,” that very same posture of artisanal apprenticeship was central to Dryden’s development of a

¹⁰ See Goodman, 1–37; Michael McKeon, “Mediation as Primal Word: The Arts, the Sciences, and the Origins of the Aesthetic,” in *This is Enlightenment*, ed. Clifford Siskin and William Warner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 384–412; and Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (1957; Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2001), 534.

reticent poetics, which had become something of a political necessity within the 1690s milieu of literary censorship.¹¹ I will end by demonstrating the role fiction had to play in positioning craft (rather than realism or reference) as a tactical response to the social problems of the period. By recovering dimensions of unspoken protest in the form of Dryden's poetry, we can begin to see a melancholy, if less explicit, origin of early prose fiction in the ethics and politics of craft labor.

Eighteenth-century critics are not the only ones reticent about the craft of literature. Virginia Woolf seems to speak for both artist and audience when she claims that "there is something incongruous, unfitting, about the term 'craftsmanship' when applied to words."¹² (Zadie Smith puts it somewhat differently when she says "Craft is too grand and foreign a word to describe what gets done most days in your pajamas.")¹³ For Woolf, following the English Dictionary, craft can mean two things, either the "making [of] useful objects out of solid matter—for example, a pot, a chair, a table," or "cajolery, cunning, deceit," in the second, craftier sense of the word. It takes little effort for Woolf to prove "how very little natural gift words have for being useful."¹⁴ She takes as her example advisory notices on the London Tube:

Written up opposite us in the railway are the words: "Do not lean out of the window." At the first reading, the useful meaning, the surface meaning, is conveyed; but soon, as we sit looking at the

¹¹ Robin Sowerby, "Review of Tanya Caldwell, *Time to Begin Anew: Dryden's Georgics and Aeneis*," *The Review of English Studies* n.s. 52.208 (2001): 580.

¹² Virginia Woolf, "Craftsmanship," in *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays*, (1942; San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1974), 198.

¹³ Zadie Smith, "That Crafty Feeling," Lecture to Columbia University's Writing Program, 24 March 2008. The quoted sentence has been excised from a more recent version of the essay in *Changing My Mind: Occasional Essays* (New York: Penguin, 2010).

¹⁴ Woolf, 198.

words, they shuffle, they change; and we begin saying, “Windows, yes windows — casements opening on the foam of perilous seas in faery lands forlorn.” And before we know what we are doing, we have leant out of the window; we are looking for Ruth in tears amid the alien corn. The penalty for that is twenty pounds or a broken neck.¹⁵

Try as they might to force words into their use-value, the public notices cannot keep even the plainest of words from spinning out toward their more poetic, and uncertain, fates. As Woolf suggests, the more we strive for linguistic utility, the more violent the results: “If we insist on forcing them against their nature to be useful, we see to our cost how they mislead us, how they fool us, how they land us a crack on the head.”¹⁶ Of course, if there were any mode of poetry in which words were supposed to cling to their use-value, it would be georgic. Eighteenth-century farmers and critics alike would often evaluate georgic’s ability to teach useful techniques for husbandry alongside — and often over and against — its artistic merit. As agricultural experimenter Alexander Blackwell once notoriously lamented, Dryden “would have rendered Virgil of general use” had he succeeded in convincing farmers that Virgil was “equally to be admir’d for his great Judgment in Husbandry as the exquisite Harmony of his Numbers.”¹⁷ In light of this reception history, georgic continues to be read as the poetic equivalent of “Do not lean out of the window.”

At the time of Dryden’s translation, the demand that language be useful was perhaps most clamorously made by the Royal Society’s History of Trades Program, an initiative designed to gather and circulate the specialized knowledge of seventeenth-

¹⁵ Woolf, 199.

¹⁶ Woolf, 199.

¹⁷ Alexander Blackwell, *A New Method of Improving Cold, Wet, and Barren Lands* (London, 1741), 55. See Clare Bucknell, “The Mid-Eighteenth-Century Georgic and Agricultural Improvement,” *Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies* 36 (2013): 337.

century artisans. At its height between 1660 and 1680, the program sent natural philosophers to workshops to collect and then disseminate in clear prose secret processes for crafts like metallurgy, glass-making, wine-making, and so forth.¹⁸ In this respect, the project might be said to contribute to Thomas Sprat's proclaimed preference for "the language of Artizans, Countrymen, and Merchants, before that, of Wits, or Scholars" in the search for that impossible ideal of a "close, naked, natural way of speaking."¹⁹ But more importantly for our purposes, this drive to make craft intelligible and available would set the stage for major shifts in production away from the model of the master craftsman and his apprentices. Historians of science have suggested that the "new attitudes toward industry" fostered by the History of Trades helped lay the necessary groundwork for the Industrial Revolution in England.²⁰ Though the program itself was short-lived, it supplied the intellectual foundation for changes to production and consumption during the period.

The link between georgic poetry and the History of Trades Project was well established from the program's inception. Although John Evelyn's "General History of all Trades" was never completed, several unpublished fragments, including "The plan of the royal garden; describing and shewing the amplitude of that part of GEORGICS,

¹⁸ On the Trades History Project, see Malcolm Oster, "The Scholar and the Craftsman revisited: Robert Boyle as Aristocrat and Artisan," *Annals of Science* 49 (1992): 255–76; Kathleen Ochs, "The Royal Society of London's History of Trades Programme: An Early Episode in Applied Science," *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 39.2 (1985): 129–58; Walter E. Houghton Jr. "The History of Trades: Its Relation to Seventeenth-Century Thought," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 2.1 (1941): 33–60; and William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 341–50. See also Joanna Picciotto, *Labors of Innocence in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2010).

¹⁹ Thomas Sprat, *The History of the Royal Society of London for the Improving of Natural Knowledge*, 2nd ed. (London, 1702), 113.

²⁰ Ochs, 130.

which belongs to horticulture,” are mentioned in his biography.²¹ Taking his cue from Francis Bacon, who famously referred to his own philosophy as a “Georgics of the Mind” and incorporated passages from the poem in *The Advancement of Learning* and his *Essays*, John Evelyn quotes Virgil’s *Georgics* consistently throughout his work.²² In his 1776 edition of Evelyn’s *Sylva: Or a Discourse of Forest Trees* (first published in 1664), the Scottish physician Alexander Hunter would likewise include extracts from his own collected *Georgical Essays* (1770–72) among the notes regarding new improvements in planting and the natural sciences.²³ The project’s use of georgic was perhaps only rivalled by the Royal Society’s “Georgicall Committee,” which adopted the Virgilian title for their collective investigations into techniques within the science of English agriculture. These references anticipate something like Addison’s definition of georgic. Where, on Addison’s account, georgic delivers agricultural precepts with the “Address of a Poet,” the trades histories had aspired to describe artisanal processes with the relatively plain address of the natural philosopher. One can see why the mode continues to hold such strong associations with referential prose. Georgic, the story tends to go, could compete against such trade manuals as a poetic instrument for agricultural and scientific improvement — a self-consciously imperfect vehicle through which to transmit specialized techniques.

²¹ John Evelyn, “The Life of John Evelyn,” in *Sculptura; or, The History and Art of Chalcography*, 2nd ed. (London, 1769), xxxi.

²² See Evelyn, “To the Reader,” in *Sylva: or, A Discourse of Forest-Trees* (1662; London, 1776). On Bacon’s engagement with georgic, see Annabel Patterson, “Pastoral versus Georgic: The Politics of Virgilian Quotation,” in *Renaissance Genres: Essays on Theory, History, and Interpretation*, ed. Barbara Lewalski (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1986), 241–267; Stanley Fish, “Georgics of the Mind: The Experience of Bacon’s *Essays*,” *Critical Quarterly* 13.1 (1971): 45–70; and James Tillman, “Bacon’s Georgics of Science,” *Papers on Language and Literature* 11 (1975): 357–77.

²³ See Alexander Hunter, preface to *Sylva* (York, 1776).

But it quickly became clear to natural philosophers that artisans were, like Woolf, rather skeptical about language's use-value. Though hoping to discover Sprat's "close, naked, natural way of speaking," members of the Royal Society soon found that the language of craft labor was not quite so transparent in practice.²⁴ Evelyn complains in a letter to Robert Boyle of the "many subjections . . . of conversing with mechanical capricious persons," and Boyle himself professes to have found "by long and unwelcome experience, that very few tradesman will, and can give a man a clear and full account of their own practices."²⁵ There were several reasons for the craft laborers' resistance to this project. Few were willing to disclose the secrets of their art because doing so would devalue their specialized labor and jeopardize their livelihood. But even when willing, rarely were tradesmen able to translate their techniques — which were built on habit and years of difficult practice — into preceptive prose. Merritt's translation of *The Art of Glass* (1662) exemplifies this difference in style when he complains of the Italian glass-maker Antonio Neri's "needless repetitions," which threatened to compromise the clarity of the trades history. He begins the treatise with a list of precepts to "Avoid our Author's Repetitions," omitting any redundancies he finds over the course of translation.²⁶ On Merritt's account, this level of stylistic inefficiency bears repeating: "Finding that the Author had thorowout the whole, so often repeated the same thing, . . . I left out those repetitions, and have either before the Books given a general account of these repetitions, or else have referr'd you to a former process, where the latter hath reiterated the same,

²⁴ Sprat, 113.

²⁵ John Evelyn to Robert Boyle, 9 August 1659, in *Memoirs of John Evelyn*, 5 vol. (London, 1827), 4:81; Robert Boyle, *The Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle*, 6 vol. (London, 1772), 3:396.

²⁶ Christopher Merritt, "To the ingenuous Reader," introduction to Antonio Neri, *The Art of Glass*, trans. Merrett (London, 1662), n.p.

and for the most part in the very same words.”²⁷ Echoing many natural philosophers’ frustrations with the language of craftsmen, Merritt goes on to “confess these reiterations caus’d a nausea in my self, and [I] believe would in thee, and therefore I passed them over.”

This ostensible failure to emulate the natural philosopher’s non-redundant prose style was not simply for lack of ability or economic necessity, however. As Neri’s original preface to *L’Art Vetraria* (1612) suggests, what Merritt took to be a “nausea[ting]” lapse in prose style was in fact key to the development of skill in his trade and its formal presence equally necessary. Proclaiming that the work displays a “truth, not told me, or perswaded me by any person whatsoever, but wrought and experimented many times with my own hands,” Neri cautions his reader that “it is impossible that they at the first time should be masters: therefore let them repeat the work, which they shall always make better, and at the last perfect as I describe it.”²⁸ To borrow terminology from Pamela Smith, these craftsmen exhibited an “artisanal literacy”: a material and productive knowledge that exists outside the intellectual purview of words.²⁹ As Neri goes on to maintain, there are inherent limitations to the prose treatise: “I warn them in particular to have consideration in colours whose certain and determinate dose cannot be given: but with experience and practice, one must learn, and with eye and judgment know

²⁷ Merritt, “To the ingenuious Reader.”

²⁸ Neri, *The Art of Glass*, A4; “la verità, non dettami, è persuasami da qual si sia persona, ma operata, et esperimentata assai volte con le mie mani . . . perche è impossibile, che questi per la prima volta possino essere maestri: però reiterino l’opera, che sempre la faranno miglio re, & in ultimo perfetta: si come io descivo” (Neri, *L’arte vetraria*, n.p.).

²⁹ Pamela Smith, *The Body of the Artisan: Art and Experience in the Scientific Revolution* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2004), 8.

when Glass is sufficiently coloured, conformable to the work, for which it ought to serve.”³⁰

While reticent about the specific doses and procedures for their trades, craftsmen were, on the other hand, quite forthcoming about the pedagogical motivations for structuring and phrasing their manuals in the language they did. Glaze-maker Bernard Palissy echoes Neri’s sentiment by claiming that even “a thousand reams of paper [describing] all of the accidents . . . encountered in learning this art” would fail to prevent the “thousand mistakes that cannot be learned from writing; and even if you had the same in writing, you would not believe any of them until practice had given you a thousand afflictions.”³¹ Against the rising demand for easy-to-follow prose manuals — with titles like *A New and Easy Method of Book-Keeping* (1722), or *The Practice of Architecture Geometrically Demonstrated and Made Easy* (1729), and satirized by the Scriblerian “short Way to Epic Poetry” in *Peri Bathous* (1727) — Palissy maintains the importance of difficulty and failure in mastering any skill.³² The repetition and reticence that so often frustrated natural philosophers was, in this sense, less an obstacle to clear accounts than a goad to practical — and indescribable — experience.

³⁰ Antonio Neri, *The Art of Glass*, trans. Christopher Merrett (London, 1662), A4; “Avuertisco in particolare ad aversi consideratione ne i colori de i quali non si puol dare certa, & determinata dosi: anzi con l’esperienza, & pratica si deve ins parare, & con l’occhio, & giuditio conoscere, quando un vetro è colorito à bastanza, conforme al lauoro perche deve servire” (Neri, *L’arte vetraria distinta in libre sette* [Firenze, 1612], n.p.).

³¹ “Quand j’aurois employé mille rames de papier pour t’écrire tous les accidens qui me sont survenuz en cherchant ledit art,” . . . “qu’il t’aviendra encores un millier de fautes, lesquelles ne se peuvent apprendre par lettres: & quand tu les aurois mesme par escrit, tu n’en croiras rien jusques à ce que la pratique t’en aye donné un millier d’afflictions” (Bernard Palissy, *Discours Admirables de la nature des eaux et fontaines, tant naturelles qu’artificielles des métaux, des sels et salines, des pierres, des terres, du feu et des émaux* [Paris, 1580], 272; translation mine). For the full English translation, see Palissy, *The Admirable Discourses of Bernard Palissy*, trans. Aurèle La Rocque (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1957), 192.

³² Alexander Pope, *Peri Bathous*, in *The Prose Works of Alexander Pope*, vol 2., ed. Rosemary Cowler (1727; Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1986), 2:226.

I'd like now to suggest that this version of craftsmanship holds an important place in the history of georgic verse. We've seen how georgic was made use of by the Royal Society, but there also exists a quieter tradition of craft labor and protest on the level of georgic form. I take Dryden's translation as my case study for its landmark importance in introducing Virgil to a vast English readership and because, published in 1697, shortly after the Royal Society's trade initiatives, it was written at the very beginning of major shifts in literary and artisanal production. Dryden was also an intriguingly ambivalent figure with respect to the new science. A member of the Royal Society from 1662 to 1666, he was likely made aware of the History of Trades Program.³³ Evelyn notes in his *Memoirs* that Dryden (then poet-Laureate) paid him a visit on 27 June 1674, well after the natural philosopher had produced his *Sculptura* (1662) on the art of chalcography and his *Sylva* (1664) on forestry.³⁴ Taking two months away from the *Virgil* to translate Charles Alphonse du Fresnoy's *The Art of Painting* (itself a sort of trades history for the visual arts), Dryden demonstrates his own skepticism about the conventions of the prose treatise. In a statement that recalls the artisanal ethos of Neri and Palissy, he writes that more is needed "beside the Rules which are given in this Treatise, or which can be given in any other."³⁵ This sentiment reverberated across the seventeenth-century poetic arts from William Temple's claim that "Rules . . . at best are capable only to prevent the making of *bad Verses*, but never able to make men *good Poets*" to Alexander Pope's

³³ Dryden's exact relation to the Royal Society remains uncertain from a lack of evidence. See James Winn, *John Dryden and His World* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1987), 129–36 and John Shanahan, "The Dryden–Davenant *Tempest*, Wonder Production, and the State of Natural Philosophy in 1667," *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 54.1 (2013): 92.

³⁴ *The Diary and Correspondence of John Evelyn*, 4 vol. (London, 1850), 2:90.

³⁵ Dryden, "A Parallel of Poetry and Painting," preface to *De Arte Graphica* (1695), in *Works*, 20:38. Alexander Pope, "To Mr. Jervas," in the appendix to Charles Alphonse Du Fresnoy, *The Art of Painting*, trans. John Dryden (York, 1783), page 186.

tribute to Dryden's translation of du Fresnoy: "Yet still how faint by precept is exprest, / The living image in the painter's breast?"³⁶ In this spirit of artisanal practice, poetry resists being distilled into theory that is nothing more than a "faint" expression of the craft; to borrow a phrase from Dryden's *The Art of Poetry*, it cannot be "fetter'd with the Rules of Art."³⁷

There was no shortage of seventeenth-century hyperbole to describe the poetic achievement of *The Georgics*. Dryden famously appraises Virgil's middle term as "the best Poem of the best Poet," Montaigne as "the most accomplished work in Poetry," and Addison "the most Compleat, Elaborate, and finisht Piece of all Antiquity."³⁸ Although the *Georgics* were much less commonly translated than the *Eclogues* or the *Aeneid*, writers who did turn their attention to Virgil's middle style noted specifically the poem's virtuosic craftsmanship. Not one to shy away from accounts of his own craft, Dryden wrote in favor of "the necessity of rhyme" using precisely such terms. In claiming that "the due choice of your words expresses your sense naturally, and the due placing them [*sic*] adapts the rhyme to it," he maintains that "both care and Art [are] requir'd to write in Verse; A good poet never establishes the first line, till he has sought out such a rhyme as may fit the sense, already prepar'd to heighten the second."³⁹ As we shall soon discover, the "father of English criticism" would continue to figure poetic labor as a

³⁶ Quoted in William Wimsatt, "Rhetoric and Poems: Alexander Pope," in *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1954), 183. According to Wimsatt, Temple is paraphrasing Sir Thomas Pope Blount, *De Re Poetica* (1694).

³⁷ Dryden, *The Art of Poetry* (1683), in *Works*, 2:line 935.

³⁸ Dryden, *Dedication of the Georgics* in *Works*, 5:137. Michel de Montaigne, "Of Books," in *The Complete Works of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1957), 298; Addison, *Essay on the Georgics*, in *Works*, 5:153. See Low, 16.

³⁹ Dryden, *An Essay of Dramatick Poesy*, in *Works*, 17:69.

matter of careful skill, or “Art,” in his late career by taking up Virgil’s heightened craftsmanship in his heroic-couplet translation of *The Georgics*.⁴⁰

Although craft only rarely enters into Dryden’s *Georgics* as thematic content, it sustains a key formal presence throughout the poem. Consider, for instance, the following passage, which seems to offer a list of georgic precepts and yet recedes from the task of resounding instruction. Cataloguing what to do when “cold Weather, and continued Rain, / The laboring Husband in the House restrain,” Dryden’s speaker ventures:

Then let him mark the Sheep, or whet the shining Share:
Or hollow Trees for Boats, or number o’re
His Sacks, or measure his increasing Store:
Or sharpen Stakes, or head the Forks, or twine
The Sallow Twigs to tye the stragling Vine:
Or wicker Baskets weave, or aire the Corn,
Or grinded Grain betwix two Marbles turn.

(l.354–60)

In the recessive voice of his speaker, Dryden offers to “let” the husbandman forecast his work — a jussive subjunctive that counteracts the many potential imperatives to work that follow (“whet,” “hollow,” “measure,” “sharpen,” and so forth). Rather than disclosing specific doses, or even prescribing a particular activity, Dryden’s speaker takes up the posture of the artisan, inviting his reader “with experience and practice . . . and with eye and judgment [to] know” the necessary tools and techniques of the trade. The anaphoric and paratactic “ors,” indeed, recall the suppressed repetitions of Neri’s *Art of Glass* — “let them repeat the work” — as a key stylistic feature for the ethics of craftsmanship, and the homophonic “or / o’re” further obscures any imperatives for instruction with an insistent reiteration that shifts its weight toward the reader’s own

⁴⁰ Samuel Johnson, “Dryden,” in *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*, 4 vol., ed. Roger Lonsdale (1779–81; Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006), 2:118.

incipient, experiential knowledge. In Dryden's hands, georgic is less a vehicle for useful precepts than a formal instantiation of artisanal practice — a mode that insists on teaching by enactment rather than by delivery.

For a poem that was consistently measured by its “general use,” Dryden's *Georgics* more often register a concern with the limits of preceptive discourse. Shortly after the invocation of Book I, the speaker notes: “I cou'd be long in Precepts, but I fear / So mean a Subject might offend your Ear” (I.256–57). Dryden privileges poetic making over the georgic imperative and takes it as a matter of course that the “Harmony of Numbers” should not be sacrificed for easy-to-follow guidelines. Even setting matters of poetic value aside, the greater part of Book I is spent describing the countless unpredictable circumstances that extend beyond the scope of the trades manual. “Ev'n when the Farmer, now secure of Fear, / Sends in the Swains to spoil the finish'd Year,” he warns in a section on the contingency of the weather, “Oft have I seen a sudden Storm arise, / From all the warring Winds that sweep the Skies” (I.427–32). Complaining of the “uncertain Seasons” (I.344) and “Fates Decree” (I.289) and even analogizing the husbandman to “Saylors” on “stormy Seas” (I.407), Dryden trains his focus on those external forces that undermine the hopeful logic of the precept. The work of chance had indeed long been crucial to understandings of craftsmanship. Over a century earlier, Palissy similarly evokes contingency to explain the indescribable “anguish” of learning one's trade. In one dialogue in which Theory attempts to gain the secrets of glaze-making from Practice, Palissy recounts how in his attempt to fabricate enamels Practice was forced “to burn the tables and the floor of [his] house” in order to heat the kiln for his many trials: “For several years, having nothing to roof over my kilns, I was every night at

the mercy of rain and winds, with no succor, aid or consolation, . . . sometimes winds and storms sprang up which blew so hard over and under my kilns that I was forced to leave everything, losing my labor.”⁴¹ For Palissy, as for Dryden, theory alone cannot offer the same knowledge as the harsh vagaries of lived, material practice.

Describing circumstances beyond one’s control is a perhaps fitting way to depict the pressures facing contemporary modes of craftsmanship, both on the individual level of painful labor and on the wider social scale that I discussed above. Just as the practical conditions for labor are left out of one’s hands, so is the fate of craftsmanship, whether of poetry or of material objects, beyond the reach of artisanal mastery. Still, the heightened craft of Dryden’s *Georgics* might offer something of an antidote (however imperfect) to the increasing commodification of art. By enacting craftsmanship at the level of verse-form rather than explicit content, georgic eschews the structure of the trades history, demonstrating the limitations of a genre that threatened to render the model of the master craftsman with his apprentices obsolete. It also helps to bring theory and practice together in its less explicit, and less referential, method of instruction. This particular contribution might indeed help to explain why although the trades histories did not succeed, georgic enjoyed enormous (and for many, still unexplained) popularity during the first half of the eighteenth century. In its heightened sense of poetic making — and, I would argue, fictionality — georgic enacts the complexities and difficulties of lived craftsmanship in ways that contemporary prose treatises could not.

⁴¹ Palissy, *The Admirable Discourses of Bernard Palissy*, trans. Aurèle La Rocque, 200; also quoted in Pamela Smith, 104–5. “J’ay resté plusieurs années que n’ayant rien dequoy faire couvrir mes fourneaux, j’estois toutes les nuits à la mercy des pluyes & vents, sans avoir aucun secours aide ny consolation, . . . parfois il se levoit des vents & tempestes qui souffloyent de telle forte le dessus & le dessous de mes fourneaux, que j’estois contraint quitter là tout, avec perte de mon labeur” (Palissy, *Discours Admirables*, 289–90).

While registering his skepticism against the imperative mode, Dryden also provides a more positive solution to the commodification of art by engaging in his own craft reticence — a version of earlier artisans’ claims that precepts and doses must not merely be given but instead “wrought and experimented many times with [one’s] own hands.” In this respect, Dryden’s most effective tool (ethically, aesthetically, and politically) is rhetoric. Dryden’s translation consistently employs a rather appropriate rhetorical device for georgic: *zeugma*, from the Greek “to yoke together.” Described by W. K. Wimsatt as “the almost inevitable effect of a tightened and precise economy of parallel,” *zeugma* provides a key example of craft reticence at the level of poetic form.⁴² Dryden introduces the effects of such economic parallelism early on in Book I as part of the invocation to Maecenas:

Pity the Poet’s and the Ploughman’s Cares,
Int’rest thy Greatness in our mean Affairs,
And use thy self betimes to hear and grant our Pray’rs.
(I.61–63)

Yoking together the poet and the ploughman through their mutual “cares,” Dryden makes a connection between two different kinds of labor by using fewer words; he does not for instance say “Pity the Poet’s Troubles and the Ploughman’s Cares.” By making connections through the implicit logic of *zeugma*, Dryden enacts one version of the craft ethos, in which laborers “do more though sa[y] less” (to borrow a phrase used by the Royal Society’s William Petty to describe Cornelius Drebbel).⁴³ In this way, Dryden begins to triangulate poetic, artisanal, and agricultural labor all on that quieter, less explicit level of georgic form.

⁴² Wimsatt, 177.

⁴³ Quoted in P. M. Rattansi, “The Intellectual Origins of the Royal Society,” *Notes and Records: The Royal Society Journal of the History of Science* 23.2 (1968): 130.

Remarkably, most zeugmas in the poem are introduced by Dryden, and, as many of his contemporary critics were quick to point out, he takes great liberty in this moment with his periphrastic translation. Where Dryden's version draws connections between poetry and ploughmanship, Virgil's original joins instead poet and patron, who, through the Latin impersonal "mecum miseratus agrestis [pity with me the farmers]," both pity the farmers below.⁴⁴ (Dryden, indeed, premises the translation on precisely such a parallel in the Epistle Dedicatory, describing *The Georgics* as his "unworthy Labours," which he has ventured to lay at the Earl of Chesterfield's feet.)⁴⁵ Luke Milbourne, one of Dryden's most clamorous detractors, would thus look to John Ogilby's translation of the same passage,

O wheresoe'er thou art, from thence incline,
And grant assistance to my bold design!
Pity, with me, poor husbandmen's affairs,
And now, as if translated, hear our prayers,

to shed light on the Augustan poet's failures. Describing Dryden's work as a "wretched perversion of Virgil's noble thought as Vicars would have blushed at," Milbourne claims that Ogilby's lines are rather "*sense, and to the Purpose: the other, poor mistaken stuff.*"⁴⁶ Where Ogilby's translation maintains distinctions between the high and low figures of georgic by taking distance from "poor husbandmen's affairs," positioning the poet alongside the gods to pity the laborers below, Dryden's zeugma forces an equivalence between poet and ploughman through the formal craft labor of his verse.

⁴⁴ Virgil, *The Georgics*, in *The Georgics of Virgil: Bilingual Edition*, trans. David Ferry (29 BCE; New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 4.

⁴⁵ Dryden, *Dedication of the Georgics*, in *Works*, 5:137.

⁴⁶ Luke Milbourne, quoted in Johnson, "Dryden," 2:146, emphasis in original. See also Paul Hammond, *Dryden and the Traces of Classical Rome* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999), 56–58.

Central to the work of husbandry, the yoke offers a useful study in contrasts between differing modes of instruction. As one way of demonstrating such a contrast, Dryden playfully shifts between form and content, consistently pairing his zeugmas with their literal counterpart.⁴⁷ Only a few lines down from the invocation, he continues: “Produce the Plough, and yoke the sturdy Steer, / And goad him till he groans beneath his Toil, / ‘Till the bright Share is bury’d in the Soil” (I.69–71). Striking for the violence of the image, these lines evince one of the rare moments in Dryden’s translation that might be referred to as precept. The imperative mood, already assaultive in contrast to the lines that come before, here finds its best voice in cruelty, in a labor that subjugates rather than joins. Indeed, in its explicit state, “yoking” recurs throughout the poem as a figure for the harsh training of cattle: the speaker, for instance, instructs, “Early begin the stubborn Child [here, a calf] to break; / For his soft Neck, a supple Collar make” as part of the necessary preparation for “the lab’ring Yoke” (III.265–66, 273) and later describes the innocent heifers to be sacrificed by Aristaeus as creatures “unknowing of the Yoke” (IV.796). Dryden thus invokes two important senses of “yoke” in the period: “To bring into or to hold in subjection or servitude; to subjugate, oppress”; and “To join, link, couple, connect, associate.”⁴⁸ (The two senses are in fact introduced even before the poem’s first line, as the first engraving to Dryden’s edition depicts two bulls being goaded by the yoke of the husbandman while another yoke joins the animals together.) In his development of the English heroic couplet, Dryden had already demonstrated the formal possibilities of the second sense; as Pope later put it, “Dryden taught to join / The

⁴⁷ For example: “The Steer, who to the Yoke was bred to bow, / (Studios of Tillage; and the crooked Plough)” (III.771–72).

⁴⁸ *OED*, s.v. “Yoke, v.,” 7, 8.

varying verse, the full resounding line.”⁴⁹ In contrast to what georgic critics describe as the “paternalistic and pedagogical voice which speaks directly to the reader,” Dryden participates in a tacit mode of craft labor.⁵⁰ In his abrupt shifts between humble, reticent joining and resounding subjugation, Dryden cultivates a version of georgic didacticism that depends less on spoken precept than on craft epistemologies of technique and experience.

I’ve argued thus far that this instantiation of craft labor on the level of georgic form offers one possible solution to incipient market changes in poetry and the other arts, but these reticent epistemologies also hold strategic value within the tumultuous politics of the 1690s. Having lost the laureateship in 1688, Dryden was acutely aware of the need for self-censorship under William III. He writes in the Dedication to *King Arthur* (1691), “But not to offend the present Times, nor a Government which has hitherto protected me, I have been obliged so much to alter the first Design, and take away so many Beauties from the Writing, that it is now no more what it was formerly, than the present Ship of the Royal Sovereign, after so often taking down, and altering, is the Vessel it was at the first Building.”⁵¹ The connection between the material that might offend and the “Beauties” and “Design” of the writing is here telling. By subordinating his original “Design” to the “taking down,” “altering,” and “building” of the Royal Sovereign (a metonym for both Dryden’s art and a nation now changed), Dryden figures the seditious matter of his writing as craftsmanship. He lends credence to Puttenham’s assertion that

⁴⁹ Pope, *The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace Imitated*, in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1966), page 644, lines 267–68.

⁵⁰ Crawford, 25.

⁵¹ John Dryden, prologue to *King Arthur*, in *Works*, 16:6.

“Poets were also from the beginning the best perswaders and their eloquence the first Rhetoricke of the world.”⁵²

Of course, there exists a long history of literature’s resistance to censorship well before the Glorious Revolution. Christopher Hill takes Shakespeare’s “Art made tongue-tied by authority,” for example, as early evidence of this historical problem.⁵³ But while Hill and others have pointed to allegory and pastoral as key strategies for evading censorship in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, those modes faced a vast decline after the Revolution; as Hill puts it, “their use is over.”⁵⁴ By the time Dryden began translating Virgil, then, the reticent mode of craft labor would provide one possible solution not only to developing market pressures but also to the continuing need for such strategies of literary evasion. Dryden alludes to the formal requirements of such a quality in comparing Chesterfield’s own succinct conversation to Virgil’s style of poetic economy. “I must confess the Criticks make it one of *Virgil’s* Beauties,” he writes, “that having said what he thought convenient, he always left somewhat for the imagination of his Readers to supply: That they might . . . think they had added to his thought, when it was all there before-hand, and he only saved himself the expence of words.”⁵⁵ This sort of move, in which the author transfers the burden of meaning into the hands of the reader, would soon become a familiar trope of aesthetic experience. Addison describes the same phenomenon in somewhat different terms by claiming that Virgil “loves to suggest a Truth indirectly”: “This is wonderfully diverting to the Understanding,” he explains,

⁵² George Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesie*, ed. G. D. Willcock and A. Walker (1589; Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1970), 8.

⁵³ Christopher Hill, “Censorship and English Literature,” in *The Collected Essays of Christopher Hill: Vol. I, Writing and Revolution in 17th-Century England* (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1985), 35.

⁵⁴ Hill, 55.

⁵⁵ Dryden, *Dedication of the Georgics*, in *Works*, 5:139.

“thus to receive a Precept, that enters as it were through a By-way . . . For here the Mind, which is always delighted with its own Discoveries, only takes the hint from the Poet, and seems to work out the rest by the Strength of her own faculties.”⁵⁶ Whereas for Addison, the labor and delight is in the mind of the reader, only taking “the hint from the Poet,” Dryden is careful to underscore the writer’s deliberate craftsmanship: the meaning was “all there before-hand,” but simply left implicit through Virgil’s own version of reticent style. The utility of such stylistic economy should be clear in the context of William III’s new government. Throughout his later work of translation, Dryden would use the style of craft labor — in which the more dangerous meaning lies tacitly in the “Beauties” or “Design” of the work — to make seditious claims without explicitly having to state them.⁵⁷

In this respect, what I’ve been calling georgic fictionality plays an important role in this particular story of form and sedition. Like georgic, fiction has its own history of courting and eschewing the burden of reference. Catherine Gallagher has recently argued that the rise of fictionality in the long eighteenth century can be attributed to authorly attempts to exonerate their work from the dangers surrounding sedition of which, as we have seen, Dryden was well aware. In contrast to a tradition of incriminating correspondence within “libelous allegory,” fiction allowed eighteenth-century novelists to make political claims within a world composed of bourgeois characters without any topical referents.⁵⁸ But also like georgic, fiction holds its own reticent history of

⁵⁶ Addison, 5:147–48

⁵⁷ On the aesthetics and politics of censorship, see Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1984) and Murray Pittcock, *Material Culture and Sedition, 1688–1760: Treacherous Objects, Secret Places* (New York: Palgrave, 2013).

⁵⁸ Gallagher, 339.

craftsmanship that has yet to be recovered. By looking to the rhetorical tradition of georgic verse, rather than the allegorical tradition of Jacobite romance, as background, we can begin to uncover a nascent version of fictionality in its poetic precedents — that is, in a reticent craft poetics that registers political dissent at the level of formal technique rather than explicit reference.⁵⁹

We've already seen one way in which the form of craft labor held strategic value within Dryden's translation. Invoking its senses of "to subjugate, or to oppress," Dryden's formal play with yoking allowed him to register a tacit critique against William III — the political resonance with the Norman or Foreign yoke quietly builds on the poem's underlying theme of invasion.⁶⁰ Such instances of *fingēre*, the "shaping" and "fashioning" from which fiction originates, work to make tacit political claims throughout the translation. Here, the several meanings of "form" in the eighteenth century, many of which were tied to craftsmanship, provide some ballast for Dryden's political strategy. Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* lists twelve definitions for the noun and seven for the verb, as well as many of its compounds — among which are *cruciform*, "Having the form of a cross," *ensiform*, "Having the shape of a sword," *omniform*, "Having every shape," and *scutiform*, "Shaped like a shield."⁶¹ As a suffix, "-form" suggests the shaping of matter; "being modified by a particular shape" is, indeed, one of

⁵⁹ On romance and the novel, see Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1988). For a recent account of the politics of Jacobite Romance, see Lucy Cogan, "Sarah Butler's *Irish Tales*, A Jacobite Romance," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 29.1 (2016): 1–22.

⁶⁰ On the theme of invasion in Dryden's *Georgics*, see Paul Davis, "'Dogmatical' Dryden: Translating the *Georgics* in the Age of Politeness," *Translation and Literature* 8.1 (1999): 48 and Tanya Caldwell, *Time to Begin Anew* (Lewisburg, Bucknell Univ. Press, 2000), 71–72. On the social history of the Norman Yoke, see Hill, 80–81.

⁶¹ Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1756).

the nominal senses of “form” that Johnson associates with Dryden.⁶² Dryden’s translation of the Jupiter Theodicy, on the origins of the difficult and active life, makes use of these meanings by intertwining both the formal and artisanal shaping of matter as a mode of quiet protest:

The Sire of Gods and Men, with hard Decrees,
Forbids our Plenty to be bought with Ease:
And wills that Mortal Men, inur’d to toil,
Shou’d exercise, with pains, the grudging Soil:
Himself invented first the shining Share,
And whetted Humane Industry by Care:
Himself did Handy-Crafts and Arts ordain;
Nor suffer’d Sloath to rust his active Reign.
(l.183–90)

Virgil’s origin story is here made into a kind of industry through the language of the forge (“whetted”), in tandem with the “rust of his active Reign.” The key georgic movement from war to work is insisted upon by Dryden’s overdetermined diction: he uses “whet” both in its literal sense of sharpening tools and in the figurative “get ready for attack,” which appears with some frequency in his earlier work.⁶³ By bringing together agricultural labor and “art,” in its contemporary sense of skill or craft, the passage hovers tacitly between the labor georgic was meant to incite and the war it meant to escape.⁶⁴

This dual movement recurs throughout Dryden’s translation in moments that invoke the formal craft of his poetics. “The crooked Scythes are Streightned into Swords,” writes Dryden in a line that best exemplifies the movement from farmer’s fields

⁶² Johnson, *The Dictionary*, s.v. “Form,” s., 4.

⁶³ See *OED*, s.v. “whet, v.,” 1d. The last two quotations recorded for this sense of the word are both from Dryden: “I have been whetting all this while” (*The Kind Keeper*, 1680, iv. i. 47); “They grin and whet like a Croatian band” (*Medall*, 1682, 240).

⁶⁴ On the role of peace in Dryden’s translation, see Melissa Schoenberger, “The Sword, The Scythe, and the “Arts of Peace” in Dryden’s *Georgics*,” *Translation and Literature* 23.1 (2014): 23–41.

to intestine war which Virgil's *Georgics* sought to reverse (I.684). The shaping and fashioning implied by Dryden's particular use of "streighten" locates the movement between work and war within the formal realm of craft poetics: "streighten" could mean both "to make straight (what is bent or crooked)" and to "close the ranks of (an army)" or "force [a hostile army] into a narrow space."⁶⁵ Concerned, as ever, with the role of poetic making, Dryden employs the verb in this second sense of confinement to signal the nearing end of his work in Book IV: "But streighten'd in my space, I must forsake / This Task; for others afterwards to take" (IV.218–19). The material metaphor was deliberate. In what Richard Kroll has described as the "material word" of Restoration poetics, Dryden figures his own poetry as the object of material labor — a shaping and fashioning of material, whether that be Virgil's dense allusions or the artifacts and ruins of recent civil war.⁶⁶ In his influential pronouncement that "*Nature* and *Homer* were, he found, the *same*," Pope would hint at this aspect of the eighteenth-century mode: Augustan commitments to early georgics were less likely to be found in the furrows of the soil than in the gathering and fashioning of literary material, in the form, rather than the content, of poetic craftsmanship.⁶⁷

This understanding of formal craft labor is, in several respects, already implicit in one of the key features of the georgic mode. Georgic heightening, that is, the "making use of what is, and making something consciously artful out of it," was an endeavor to

⁶⁵ *OED*, s.v. "straighten, v.," 1a; s.v. "straiten, v.," 1b, 4a, 4b. An earlier poet renders the passage in less artisanal terms, for instance, as "the stiff Labourer leaves / Ith' half-shorn fields the uncollected sheaves, / to female Taskers, and exchanged his hook / Into a Sword" (William Chamberlayne, *Pharonnida* [1659], 2.2.67–70; quoted in Lowe, 247).

⁶⁶ Richard Kroll, *The Material Word: Literate Culture in the Restoration and Early Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1991).

⁶⁷ Alexander Pope, *Essay on Criticism* (1711), in *Poems*, page 148, line 135 (italics in original). Classicists have often noted that Virgil's *Georgics* were by far his most allusive set of poems. See Richard F. Thomas, "Virgil's *Georgics* and the Art of Reference," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 90 (1986): 171–98.

elevate the most ordinary content through careful poetic language.⁶⁸ Robert Wolseley expands upon the sentiments of Dryden's Preface to *Tyrannick Love* to offer one version of this georgic task when he maintains, "If the shapings be just, and the Trimming proper, no matter for the coarsenesse of the Stuffe: in all true Poetry, let the Subject or Matter of the Poem be in it self never so great, or so good, 'tis still the Fashion that makes the Value."⁶⁹ In Dryden's translation of the *Georgics*, the "shaping" and "fashioning" of literary materials is indeed where its poetic value would lie. Writing of his own georgic "embellishment" in materialist terms, Dryden finds an opportunity to craft quiet dissent:

Nor can I doubt what Oyl I must bestow,
To raise my Subject from a Ground so low:
And the mean Matter which my Theme affords,
T'embellish with Magnificence of Words.
(III.453–56)

This mode of georgic heightening, or "embellishment," would help define georgic not as a mode of reference but in terms of a reticent, tactical formalism. Deliberately placing his most seditious meaning in the "beauties" and "Design" of the work, Dryden looked to the very premise of georgic to carve out a quiet mode of dissent.

This work of georgic heightening echoes throughout contemporary understandings of fiction.⁷⁰ Samuel Johnson influentially claims, for instance, that the "chief advantage" which contemporary fictions have over real life is "that their authors are at liberty, tho' not to invent, yet to select objects, and to cull from the mass of mankind those individuals upon which the attention most ought to be employ'd; as a

⁶⁸ Ronald Paulson, *Breaking and Remaking: Aesthetic Practice in England, 1700–1820* (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1989), 5–6.

⁶⁹ Robert Wolseley, preface to *Valentinian; A Tragedy*, in *Rochester: The Critical Heritage* (1685; London: Routledge, 1972), 149. Goodman, 29 reads an earlier section of Wolseley's preface as evidence for georgic's "magnifying powers" within the context of experimental philosophy's techniques for mediation.

⁷⁰ *OED*, s.v. "fiction, *n.*"

diamond, though it cannot be made, may be polished by art, and placed in such a situation, as to display that lustre which before was buried among common stones.”⁷¹

Though more often cited for sounding georgic’s death knell — as he famously said of John Dyer’s *The Fleece*, “The subject, Sir, cannot be made poetical” — Johnson provides an account of fiction that sounds remarkably close to the work of georgic: to make something “artful” out of the ordinary, “T’embellish with Magnificence of Words.”⁷²

Recounting in the same essay the anecdote in which “the slipper ill executed was censured by a shoemaker who happened to stop in his way at the *Venus of Apelles*,” Johnson introduces an ethos of craftsmanship to his account of “lectures on conduct, and introductions into life.”⁷³ Even more than in the faithful representation of “real life,” fiction’s best lessons are taught through the form, rather than the content, of craftsmanship, through labor unspoken and undirected.

While the question of fictionality has been given renewed attention in recent years, those discussions continue to be anchored by its vexed relation to realism, reference, and verisimilitude — the issue of how fiction interacts with the external world. This is, perhaps, to be expected, as some of the most intriguing problems about the mode are based on its reception; as Gallagher quips, the very definition of fictionality has tended to escape literary analysis because we’ve been content “simply to know fiction when we see it.”⁷⁴ But there exists at the same time an overlooked history of fictionality, one based on the shaping, forming, and fashioning of ordinary materials, which, I’ve

⁷¹ Samuel Johnson, “On Fiction,” no. 4, 31 March 1740, *The Rambler*, vol. 1 (London, 1740), page 28.

⁷² James Boswell, *Boswell’s Life of Johnson*, 6 vol., ed. George Birkbeck, Norman Hill, and L.F. Powell (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1934), 2:453.

⁷³ Johnson, “On Fiction,” 24, 26.

⁷⁴ Gallagher, 336.

argued, has ties to the interwoven traditions of georgic and craft labor. Though by necessity more difficult to recover, the allied traditions of poetry and artisanship offered both an ethical revision to georgic didacticism and a reticent critique of contemporary politics. In examining these material histories of sedition, this unspoken link between precarious labor and the literature of opposition, we may begin to recover this quieter tradition of fictionality — the craft of reticent, though insistent protest.

Chapter 2: Pope's Chiastic Optimism

In a footnote to his essay “On Perpetual Peace,” Kant registers his disagreement with one of the more policy-based applications of Pope's deist theodicy. At first an assessment of the style and judgment of Swiss statesman Mallet du Pan, the footnote then proceeds to dismantle Pope's seemingly optimistic logic:

Mallet du Pan, in his flamboyant but hollow and empty style, boasts of having at last, after many years of experience, become convinced of the truth of Pope's famous saying: ‘For forms of government let fools contest; Whate’er is best administered is best.’ If this means that the best administered government is the best administered, he has cracked a nut (as Swift puts it) and been rewarded with a worm. But if it means that the best administered government is also the best kind of government (i.e. the best constitution), it is completely false, for examples of good government prove nothing whatsoever about kinds of government.¹

A less balanced version of his famous chiastic aphorism, “whate’er is, is right,” Pope's couplet suggests that political skill — that which is “best administered” — serves as the best measure for good government. For Kant such a claim evinces in Pope the same problem as that of his Swiss advocate: “a flamboyant but hollow and empty style.” This is perhaps why Kant looks to Swift's *Tale of a Tub* for support. Swift's own mock adage, which describes wisdom as a “*Hen*, whose Cackling we must value and consider, because it is attended with an *Egg*” but also “lastly . . . a *Nut*, which unless you chuse with Judgment, may cost you a Tooth, and pay you with nothing but a Worm,” in fact begins

¹ Immanuel Kant, “Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch,” in *Kant: Political Writings*, 2nd ed., ed. Hans Reiss, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991), 102. More recently, Colin Nicholson has claimed that “when Pope wrote in the *Essay on Man* that as far as government is concerned, ‘whate’er is best administer’d is best’, he was implicitly testifying to a class-based commonalty that after the Civil War upheavals was under no circumstances to be brought into question again” (*Writing and the Rise of Finance: Capital Satires of the Early Eighteenth Century* [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994], 22).

with a critique of precisely such hollow style. He writes that “the greatest Maim” given to the general reception of contemporary writings “hath been a superficial Vein among many Readers of the present Age, who will by no means be persuaded to inspect beyond the Surface and the Rind of Things.”² On Kant’s account, Pope and du Pan both substitute flamboyant style for measured political judgment. By placing too much weight on political administration, they both fail to “inspect beyond the Surface and the Rind of Things.”

Kant’s not alone among readers in describing Pope as all surface and no substance. It has indeed become something of a commonplace to note that while Pope is a virtuosic poet, his political philosophy tends to offer very little that is new or even right. As Lady Mary Montagu once wryly claimed, “Poor Pope philosophy displays on / With so much rhyme and little reason, / And, though he argues ne’er so long / That all is right, his head is wrong.”³ A joke on Pope’s optimistic chiasmus, “Whate’er is, is right,” Montagu’s lines diagnose in Pope’s poetry a failure of his glittering rhymes to stand the test of reason. On this issue modern readers of Pope have tended to divide themselves neatly into two camps. On the one hand, many critics have along with Kant found in Pope’s deistic optimism and the glittering surfaces of his texts a political complacency that renders his politics passive and quietist at best and politically suspect at worst.⁴ On the other, critics like J. Paul Hunter have claimed a more critical, less complacent politics

² Jonathan Swift, “A Tale of a Tub,” in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Claude Rawson (New York: Norton, 2010), 30.

³ Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, “The Dean’s Provocation for Writing the Lady’s Dressing-Room,” in *Eighteenth-Century Poetry: An Annotated Anthology*, 3rd ed., ed. David Fairer and Christine Gerrard (Chichester: Wiley–Blackwell, 2015), lines 45–48.

⁴ Laura Brown has influentially described the “reciprocal gesture” of Pope’s neoclassicism as “ideology formation,” as an “invented memory with an ideological end” (*Alexander Pope* [New York: Blackwell, 1985], 27).

on the level of form. In the contemporary terms of method, this might be described as the difference between symptomatic and surface reading, though perhaps not quite.⁵ Though Brown's ideology critique does profess as its mission to inspect beyond the rind of things, her "attacks" are often more measured and attendant to the intricacies of Pope's poetic surfaces than accounts have tended to allow. And though Hunter situates his own work starkly against Brown's approach, he does not preclude himself from ideology critique. The many surprising points of agreement between such diametrically opposed critics attest to the varied and difficult formal and political entanglements of Pope's literary career.

In what follows, I suggest that Pope's focus on the skill of administrative politics offers a way of elaborating this hazy middle ground between form and critique in his later oppositional poetry. Pope's later works pick up where Dryden's *Georgics* had left off by mobilizing the reticent form of craft labor as a mode of political protest. Both responding to political and financial crisis, to the loss of the laureateship, and to the chaos of economic instability, Dryden and Pope take up a poetics of craftsmanship in order to level a critique against contemporary statecraft. But where Dryden's georgics do the work of yoking together the sovereign and the husbandman — the landlord and the laborer — Pope's oppositional poetics place their focus on the work of the tenant, figured variously in relation to Walpole as the steward, the manager, or the administrator of the

⁵ J. Paul Hunter writes, for instance that the binary couplet can be used "not just to reflect common usage and assumptions but to represent and modify contemporary practice": "sometimes, in our zeal to find texts representative of a culture . . . we lose track of the cultural desire to instruct and modify contemporary practice" ("Formalism and History: Binarism and the Anglophone Couplet," *Modern Language Quarterly* 61.1 [2000]: 129). See also Hunter, "Form as Meaning: Pope and the Ideology of the Couplet," *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 37.3 (1996): 257–70.

nation and the estate.⁶ With this turn to the problem of management, Pope refigures craft labor as the quintessential middle term — somewhere between landlord and laborer, sovereign and subject — while also perfecting the kind of political obliquity that was incipient in Dryden’s artisanal translations. By mobilizing the apparently older rural virtues of georgic alongside the newer commercial virtues of craft labor, Pope is able to position himself ambivalently within — and thus is able to offer his own needling, Horatian critique of — the new managerial politics of Walpole. In this respect, I seek to explain a key paradox of Pope’s late style: that his most clamorous political critiques occur alongside some of his most optimistic and complacent poetic claims. How might we reconcile a poet so seemingly confident in economic and administrative order with one who became increasingly clamorous in his opposition to Robert Walpole and his “corrupt” political administration?⁷ What might seem a glaring inconsistency of the later work, I will argue, is an effect of Pope’s evasive craft poetics, in which political critiques are instantiated by the “flamboyant” surfaces of his poems.

Far from an exercise in economic overconfidence, Pope’s chiasmus offers a mode of resistance particular to the form and politics of his time. When read together with *The Craftsman*, an opposition journal edited by Nicholas Amhurst to which Pope’s mentor

⁶ On “The Theme of False Stewardship” in Pope, see Howard Erskine-Hill, *The Social Milieu of Alexander Pope: Lives, Example, and The Poetic Response* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1975), 243–59.

⁷ This question has often been taken up and then quickly set aside by critics of Pope’s poetry. In her account of Pope’s “moral combat,” for instance, Carole Fabricant aims to address the tension between Pope’s self-preoccupation and his engagement in cultural warfare “notwithstanding his professed position as a man of peace” (“Pope’s Moral, Political and Cultural Combat,” in *Pope*, ed. Brean Hammond [New York: Longman, 1996], 41). Similarly in their account of economics and morality in Pope, John Barrell and Harriett Guest conclude that contradiction was allowed to remain in eighteenth-century long verse, allowing the amorality of economic theory to coexist with attempts to soften political economy with the new language of politeness and moral cultivation. See “On the Use of Contradiction: Economics and Morality in the Eighteenth-Century Long Poem,” in *Pope*, 117–30. As I suggest below, “corruption” is one of Pope’s most nebulous, and often least effective, terms of political critique.

Henry St. John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke was a key contributor, Pope's poetry demonstrates how the strategies of reticence and craft labor had become indispensable to oppositional pamphlets and poems alike. This chapter posits a focus on managerial poetics as a possible if imperfect solution to the problem of complacency. The poetics of administrative skill and management offer a third term for reconciling his ethic of moderation with his most clamorous political satires.⁸ In contradistinction to the complacency to which Pope's late poetry often attests, his formal theodicy allows him to remain censorious about the contemporary administration and management of the state through a seemingly passive, even quietist, mode.

I find my work for this chapter enabled by recent developments in the New Formalism, which takes as a premise the capacity for close attention to literary and poetic language to help complicate our understanding of history.⁹ A renewed interest in form has much to offer the New Economic criticism, which, from its height in the nineties and well into today, has tended to focus on the content of novels and satires rather than on poetry or aesthetics, much less georgic.¹⁰ Pope's form not only affords him some much-

⁸ Brean Hammond describes "the classical ideal of *concordia discors* in its social application as a doctrine of moderation, balance, and eclecticism" (*Pope and Bolingbroke: A Study of Friendship and Influence* [Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1984], 116). For more on chiasmus in the neoclassical tradition, see Sanford Budick, "Chiasmus and the Making of Literary Tradition: The Case of Wordsworth and 'The Days of Dryden and Pope.'" *ELH* (1993): 961–73 and William Wimsatt, "One Relation of Rhyme to Reason Alexander Pope." *Modern Language Quarterly* 5.3 (1944): 333–35.

⁹ See Marjorie Levinson, "What is New Formalism?" *PMLA* 122.2 (2007): 558–69 and Susan Wolfson, "Reading for Form," *Modern Language Quarterly* 61.1 (2000): 1–16. The formalism of this chapter is also greatly influenced by what Boris Eikenbaum described as "the palpableness of form," that is, "form understood as content" ("The Theory of the Formal Method," in *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views*, ed. Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska [Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971], 13): "Verse form, so understood, is not in opposition to any 'content' extrinsic to it; it is not forced to fit inside this 'form' but is conceived of as the genuine content of verse speech. Thus the very concept of form, as in our previous works, emerges with a new sense of sufficiency" (Eikenbaum, 25).

¹⁰ See Martha Woodmansee and Mark Osteen, *The New Economic Criticism: Studies at the Intersection of Literature and Economics* (New York: Routledge, 1999). As I noted in the general introduction, most criticism of georgic has also tended to privilege content over form — a tendency I hope to redress. For examples of content-driven accounts of the mode see Markman Ellis, "River and Labour in Samuel Scott's Thames Views in the Mid-Eighteenth Century," *The London Journal* 37.3 (2012): 152–55; and Robert

needed protection against charges of libel and sedition; it also allows him to make some radical and surprising claims about the shift from mercantilism to early capital and the changes to structures of agricultural production that occurred alongside it. One reason why Pope's hopeful chiasmus seems so opaque (and wrong) to later readers is because its sense is not explicitly stated but rather participates in a more indirect claim about the importance of craft labor to literature, to politics, and in relation to social and economic change. Throughout his later works, Pope mobilizes craft labor, in conjunction with the georgic mode, to critique Walpole's statecraft as a failure of skill which exemplifies the most dangerous aspects of both established traditions and new political economies.

The problem of Pope's formal theodicy becomes clear in the work of some of his earliest and most important poetic successors. Taking up the neoclassical poet's optimistic chiasmus in *Thoughts on the Work of Providence*, Phillis Wheatley places pressure on Pope's continued assurances that "whate'er is, is right":

Creation smiles in various beauty gay,
While day to night, and night succeeds to day:
That *Wisdom*, which attends *Jehovah's* ways,
Shines most conspicuous in the solar rays:
Without them, destitute of heat and light,
This world would be the reign of endless night:
In their excess how would our race complain,
Abhorring life! how hate its length'ned chain!
From air adust what num'rous ills would rise?
What dire contagion taint the burning skies?
What pestilential vapours, fraught with death,
Would rise, and overspread the lands beneath?¹¹

Irvine, "Labor and Commerce in Locke and Early Eighteenth-Century English Georgic," *ELH* 76.4 (2009): 970–77.

¹¹ Phillis Wheatley, *Thoughts on the Works of Providence*, in *The Collected Works of Phillis Wheatley*, ed. John Shields (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), lines 29–40.

Wheatley's "reign of endless night" here reads as an incomplete chiasmus — a world of pestilence and contagion that never quite "succeeds" to the shining wisdom of day. While the subjunctive "would" appears to mark the latter half of her stanza as an exercise in imagination or "roving *Fancy*," the figure of life's "length'ned chain" pulls the poem back into reality.¹² Given the "Attestation" to the young female poet's authorship and enslavement which was originally prefaced to her works, "the num'rous ills" of Wheatley's life certainly wouldn't have eluded the contemporary reader. For a reflection on providence, moreover, the poem dwells somewhat incongruously in discord.¹³ A neat inversion of Pope's iconic depiction of *concordia discors* — "Not *Chaos*-like together crush'd and bruis'd, / But as the World, harmoniously confus'd" — Wheatley begins with harmony and ends with chaos.¹⁴

In *An Essay on Woman*, Mary Leapor registers her own concern with Pope's formal optimism. Like Wheatley, Leapor acknowledged Pope as a key influence in her work, and also like Wheatley this made her especially attuned to the limitations of Pope's aesthetics. Her poem begins by giving the lie to Pope's world of cosmic harmony — his perfect couplet-balance of opposites:

Woman — a pleasing, but a short-liv'd Flow'r,
Too soft for Business, and too weak for pow'r:
A Wife in Bondage, or neglected Maid,

¹² Wheatley, "On Imagination," in *The Collected Works*, line 9. As with her "reign of endless night," the imagination is soon violently constrained: "silken fetters all the senses bind, / And soft captivity involves the mind" (12).

¹³ For the "Attestation," in which eighteen of "the most respectable characters in *Boston*" certify that the collected poems were written by Phillis Wheatley who was "brought an uncultivated Barbarian from *Africa*, and has ever since been, and now is, under the Disadvantage of serving a Slave in a Family in this Town," see *The Collected Works*, page vii. For further context surrounding the Attestation see Henry Louis Gates Jr., "In Her Own Write," forward to *The Collected Works of Phillis Wheatley*, vii–xxii.

¹⁴ Pope, *Windsor Forest*, in *The Poems of Alexander Pope, A Reduced Version of the Twickenham Text*, ed. John Butt (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1967), lines 13–14.

Despis'd, if ugly; if she's fair — betray'd.¹⁵

The lines read almost as a clinic on neoclassical balance and antithesis; indeed, they're conspicuously exact. Each medial caesura splits perfectly down the middle of Leapor's four lines, and the sentence is evenly bracketed by the initial and final em-dashed words "woman" and "betray'd." Inasmuch as Leapor alludes in her title to Pope's *Essay on Man*, in which he sets out to "vindicate the ways of God to Man," the eerie balance of Leapor's opening effectively registers her dissatisfaction with that attempt.¹⁶ Whereas that couplet-like balance is supposed to hold opposites in tension, Leapor demonstrates that when applied to women's experience, opposites in form become the same thing in content, that is, a "keen Sensation of superior Woe."¹⁷ Here Leapor perfects a poetics of the double-bind. Her impossibly balanced couplets and the exact proportions of her stanza leave very little, if any, room for vindication.

Pope's formal optimism has likewise met with skepticism in both modern and Enlightenment political economy. In a recent issue of *Economic History Review*, Sheilagh Ogilvie cites Pope as an early example of the "excessive optimism" toward established institutions. Economic historians, she claims, "have tended to adopt the view that if a particular economic institution has persisted stably for a long time, it must have been efficient — a modern version of Pope's sentiment in his 1732 'Essay on Man', that 'whatever is, is right.'"¹⁸ Like Kant, Ogilvie finds in Pope an overly complacent attitude toward political economy, and that attitude is only exacerbated by the formal balance of

¹⁵ Mary Leapor, *An Essay on Woman*, in *The Works of Mary Leapor*, ed. Richard Greene and Ann Messenger (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004), lines 1–4.

¹⁶ Pope, *Essay on Man*, in *the Poems of Alexander Pope*, line 16.

¹⁷ Leapor, 32.

¹⁸ Sheilagh Ogilvie, "'Whatever is, is right'? Economic Institutions in pre-industrial Europe," *Economic History Review* 60.4 (2007): 652.

his chiasmus, “whate’er is, is right,” often read as shorthand for his deist theodicy. As Leapor and Wheatley make clear in their own poetry, the figure tends to bring with it an uneasy sense of placidity.¹⁹ It serves as the best expression of the Horatian posture of moderation in Pope’s translation of the *First Satire of the Second Book*, for instance: “In Moderation placing all my Glory, / While Tories call me Whig, and Whigs a Tory.”²⁰ Pope would often cast himself as a more acquiescent version of his Latin exemplar. Famously inverting Horace’s assertion, “I would bend the world to myself, not myself to the world [Et mihi res, non me rebus, submittere conor],” Pope writes in his *Epistle to Bolingbroke*: “Back to my native moderation slide, / And win my way by yielding to the tide” (*Ep.* 1.1, 33–34).²¹ As though Horace’s more militant chiasmus were unsuitable to his formal theodicy, Pope reserves the figure for his own endorsement of moderate politics. Pope’s poetics, the story would seem to go, refuses to make waves.

Pope’s moderate chiasmus plays a much less straightforward role in the world of eighteenth-century economic debates, however. Montesquieu turns, for instance, to that

¹⁹ As many exegetists have noted, chiasmus was a key leitmotif of the Bible. For debates surrounding role of chiasmus in Biblical texts see David deSilva, “X Marks the Spot? A Critique of the Use of Chiasmus in Macro-Structural Analyses of Revelation,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 30.3 (2008): 343–71 and John Breck, “Chiasmus as a Key to Biblical Interpretation,” chapter 5 of *Scripture in Tradition: The Bible and Its Interpretation in the Orthodox Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001), 89–104. For an account of chiasmus used to undermine finance’s claims of morality in *David Simple*, see Katherine Binhammer, “Circulating Stories and Narrative Currency in *David Simple*,” *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 56.1 (2015): 3–6. See also David Quint, “Virgil’s Double Cross: Chiasmus and the *Aeneid*,” *American Journal of Philology* 132.2 (2011): 273–300 for an account of chiasmus in Virgil, especially for the trope’s implications vis-à-vis the interchangeability of characters. On chiasmus and mnemonic structure, see William Engel, *Chiastic Designs in English Literature from Sidney to Shakespeare* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2009), 13–19.

²⁰ Pope, *The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated*, in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, lines 67–68. References to the Horatian Imitations will hereafter be cited parenthetically by either book, satire, and line number or book, epistle, and line number: *Sat.* 2.1, 67–68, for example.

²¹ On Leopold Damrosch’s account, Pope’s inversion of Horace “speaks of yielding while the couplet structure asserts control” (*The Imaginative World of Alexander Pope* [Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1987], 28). Helen Deutsch argues that this underscores Pope’s “ideological and historical fluidity” rather than his “stoical integrity” (“Bolingbroke’s Laugh: Alexander Pope’s *Epistle to Bolingbroke* and the Rhetoric of Embodied Exemplarity,” *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 38.1 [2005]: 141). Hammond reads the couplet as “a deliberate affront to the reader,” most especially to Bolingbroke himself (121).

same optimistic figure to describe the civilizing qualities of commerce: “It is an almost general rule that everywhere there are gentle mores, there is commerce and that everywhere there is commerce, there are gentle mores [c’est presque une règle générale, que partout où il y a des mœurs douces, il y a du commerce ; et que partout où il y a du commerce, il y a des mœurs douces].”²² Claiming *le doux commerce* as an “almost general rule,” Montesquieu famously argues for a commercial republic as the ideal political order for cultivating peace — though in this case “cultivate” might be too active a verb. Pope’s chiasmic style is indeed particularly well-suited to a model of commerce that demands almost no governmental intervention. In this, both he and Montesquieu participate in a genealogy of writers and poets who treat the balanced form of poetry as one answer to contemporary debates surrounding mercantilism and the problem of luxury.

In the shift from the zero-sum game of mercantilism to early arguments for commerce, luxury, and self-interest, chiasmus in fact played a fairly central role. Writers as different as Mandeville and Montesquieu were faced with the task of disproving what Istvan Hont has described as “the jealousy of trade,” that is, the idea that a nation’s economic success through trade was crucial to its military survival — a disparaging phrase, on Hont’s account, that referred to “a pathological conjunction between politics and the economy that turned the globe into a theatre of perpetual commercial war.”²³ This perspective is put rather succinctly by the governor general of the Dutch East India company, Jan Pieterszoon Coen, who maintained that “we cannot make war without trade

²²Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, ed and trans. Anne M. Cohler, Basia C. Miller, and Harold S. Stone (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989), 338.

²³ Istvan Hont. *Jealousy of Trade* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2010), 6.

nor trade without war.”²⁴ Whereas Hume would later argue in the essay from which Hont takes his title that the logic of war and the logic of trade are absolutely separate, the formal logic of the Dutch East India company put forward that economic prosperity was a limited resource: the balance of Coen’s chiasmus was thus enforced through militaristic exploits and colonization.²⁵

It’s in offering revisions to such mercantilist claims that Pope’s chiasmus begins to run into some trouble. What critics have sometimes referred to as Pope’s “economic theodicy,” or the “knotting together of economic amoralism and theodicy,” helps to illustrate the perils of moral and providential defenses of emergent capitalism.²⁶ One of the more conspicuous aspects of Pope’s economic theodicy is the way in which it so often and so easily slides into Mandevillian logic and discourse. Critics have pointed for instance to *The Epistle to Bathurst*, the original subtitle of which borrows directly from *The Fable of the Bees*: “private vices, public benefits.”²⁷ The issue seems to me even more deeply ingrained in that poem’s companion piece *The Epistle to Burlington*, which

²⁴ Quoted in Francine McKenzie, introduction to *A Global History of Trade and Conflict Since 1500*, ed. Lucia Coppolaro and Francine McKenzie (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 1.

²⁵ David Hume, *Of the Jealousy of Trade*, in *Writings on Economics*, ed. Eugene Rotwein (Somerset: Routledge, 2017), 78–82.

²⁶ Barrell and Guest, 121. Gregori defines the term similarly as the conviction that “the world is a gigantic self-regulating market in which all components tend to a providential end and individuals are the unconscious agents of those providential plans” (“Introduction: Pope on the Margins and in the Center,” *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 38.1 [2005]: xxiii). Barrell and Guest write of the portrait of Old Cotta and his son in *Bathurst*: “The argument of these three paragraphs has been conceived within a hybrid discourse, one we often encounter in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, and one of whose constituents is that form of theodicy whose governing maxim is concordia discors. God’s providence is evident in the harmonious reconciliation of extremes, of contraries; the harmonious duration of the universe is based on the very changeability of its constituent elements” (119).

²⁷ See Paul Alpers, “Pope’s *To Bathurst* and the Mandevillian State” *ELH* 25.1 (1958): 23. See Nicholson, “The Mercantile Bard,” *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 38.1 (2005): 90–92 for more on the comparison between Mandeville and *To Bathurst* through the lens of the book-trade.

appears to suggest some conciliation to Mandeville's worldview in claiming that Timon's excessive luxury and bad taste nonetheless create jobs:²⁸

Yet hence the Poor are cloath'd, the Hungry fed;
Health to himself, and to his Infants bread
The Lab'rer bears: What his hard Heart denies,
His charitable Vanity supplies.²⁹

Against the opulent and distasteful background of Timon's villa, about which Pope hisses "I curse such lavish cost, and little skill, / And swear no Day was ever past so ill" (167–68), an oxymoronic phrase like "charitable Vanity" seems to invite an ironic reading. But Pope's original footnote to the passage also offers a useful guide for reading his theory of providence in terms of his defense of emergent capitalism. "The *Moral* of the whole," the footnote reads, "where PROVIDENCE is justified in giving Wealth to those who squander it in this manner. A bad Taste employs more hands, and diffuses Expence more than a good one" (*B*, page 594n). Explaining Timon's unearned wealth with this early version of trickle-down economics, Pope brings providence to bear on contemporary criticisms of mercantilism. In this moment, one contemporary response to the Dutch East India Company's militarization of trade might well sound something like "whate'er is, is right."

Conversely, when read in this context, Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* begins to sound downright Popean. One critic, for instance, describes the lines from *An Essay on Man*, "Till jarring int'rests of themselves create / Th'according music of a well-mix'd

²⁸ Brown does describe *To Burlington* as "an example of Pope's debt to Mandeville's proto-utilitarian ethic," however (*Alexander Pope*, 36). On the correlation between the two poems, see McLaverty, 228. In fact, Pope continues this line of reasoning elsewhere: "Boys and Girls whom Charity maintains" that "Verse cheers their leisure, Verse assists their work, / Verse prays for Peace, or sings down Pope and Turk" (231, 235–36).

²⁹ Pope, *Epistle IV. To Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington*, in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, lines 169–72. Hereafter abbreviated *B* and cited parenthetically by line number.

State” as an “unusually temporalized version of *concordia discors*” that recalls the *Grumbling Hive*: “This, as in Musick Harmony, / Mad Jarrings in the main agree.”³⁰ In this moment of the poem, however, Mandeville is marshalling the rhetoric of *concordia discors* to demonstrate the problem with an interventionist state:

This was the State’s Craft, that maintain’d
The Whole, of which each Part complain’d:
This, as in Musick Harmony,
Made Jarrings in the Main agree;
Parties directly opposite
Assist each oth’r, as t’were for Spight;
And Temp’rance with Sobriety
Serve Drunkenness and Gluttony.³¹

Here Mandeville works to discount the “dexterous management” of “skilfull Politicians” who succeed in rendering “Men useful to each other as well as tractable” and who “first put man upon crossing his Appetites and subduing his dearest inclinations.”³² For even while the “jarrings” of the poem seem “in the Main [to] agree,” the final result is that of vice — a neat inversion of his central theorem that private vice should yield public benefits. For Mandeville, the “dexterous management” of mercantilism trades only in negative affect, the enforcement “a strict Observance of certain Rules to avoid those Things that might bring this troublesome Sense of Shame upon him.” He levels a criticism against mercantilism’s demand for “a dexterous Management of ourselves, a stifling of our Appetites, and hiding the real Sentiments of our Hearts before others.”³³ For British Mercantilists, Mandeville complains, skill is only used to artificially suppress one’s natural and beneficial inclinations: “The well bred Gentleman [who] places his

³⁰ Peter Knox-Shaw, “Pope, Mandeville, and *An Essay on Man*,” *Notes and Queries* 61.3 (2014): 400.

³¹ Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees* (New York: Penguin, 1989), page 68.

³² Mandeville, 85, 87.

³³ Mandeville, 102.

greatest Pride in the Skill he has of covering it with Dexterity.”³⁴ On Mandeville’s account, only through minimal state intervention will England succeed in the cultivation of “an opulent, knowing, and polite nation”: “promot[ing] Navigation, cherish[ing] the Merchant, and encourag[ing] Trade in every Branch of it; this will bring Riches, and by the help of what I have named and good Management, it is that Politicians can make a People potent, renown’d and flourishing.”³⁵

Despite these moments of resonance, however, Pope’s approach to craft (whether literary, political, or economic) remains altogether distinct from that of Mandeville. The philosopher’s choice of doggerel satire alone should suggest at least some incompatibility in the form and policy of these two writers.³⁶ Consider, for instance, Mandeville’s comparison of the “Body Politick” to a “Bowl of Punch”: “Avarice should be the sow’ring, and Prodigality the sweetning of it. The Water I would call the Ignorance, Folly and Credulity of the floating insipid Multitude; whilst Wisdom, Honour, Fortitude, and the rest of the sublime Qualities of Men, which separated by Art from the dregs of Nature, the fire of Glory has exalte and refin’d into a Spiritual Essence, should be an equivalent to Brandy.”³⁷ A world apart from the carefully arranged couplets of Pope’s *concordia discors*, Mandeville’s punch-bowl model of economic prosperity takes seriously what Pope consistently posits as satire. Indeed, Mandeville’s body politic sounds conspicuously close in method to the cursory solution to the problem of woman being “at best a Contradiction still” in *Epistle to a Lady*: that is, to produce a “softer man”

³⁴ Mandeville, 155–56.

³⁵ Mandeville, 201.

³⁶ For his classic account of *concordia discors* in Pope, see Earl Wasserman, *The Subtler Language: Critical Readings of Neoclassic and Romantic Poems* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1969), 101–68.

³⁷ Mandeville, 135.

by combining his favorite male and female qualities — “Shakes all together, and produces — You.”³⁸

As Pope would argue throughout his career, such “shaking together” offers a sorry excuse for neoclassical aesthetics. He suggests as much in *Peri Bathos* — a mock-didactic treatise on “The Art of Sinking in Poetry” and satiric inversion of Longinus’s *On the Sublime* — when he frames the “*Short Way to Epic Poetry*” in the language of an easy-to-follow how-to manual. The treatise posits itself as a burlesque upon the more “mechanical” aspects in poetry:

Take out any old Poem, History-book, Romance, or Legend, . . . those parts of story which afford most scope for *long Descriptions*: Put these pieces together and throw all the adventures you fancy into *one Tale*. Then take a Hero, whom you may chuse by the sound of his name, and put him into the midst of these adventures: There let him *work* for twelve books; at the end of which you may take him out, ready prepared to *conquer* or to *marry*; it being necessary that the conclusion of an Epic Poem be *fortunate*.³⁹

“Throw[ing]” adventures and even just “sounds” together, Pope’s guide to manufacturing epic here encapsulates everything wrong with the turn away from craftsmanship. As we saw earlier in Dryden, the problem with changes to the structure of craft and the how-to manuals of the Royal Society is that they debase individual craft labor, and Pope seems to be taking this idea a step further through the language of formulas and manufacturing tales. In this regard, his recipe for a Battle is quite telling: “Pick a large quantity of Images and Descriptions from Homer’s *Iliads*, with a spice or two of Virgil, and if there remain any overplus, you may lay them by for a *Skirmish*. Season it well with *Similes*,

³⁸ Pope, *Epistle to a Lady*, in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, lines 268–80.

³⁹ Pope, *Peri Bathous*, in *The Prose Works of Alexander Pope*, 2 vol., ed. Rosemary Cowler (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1986), 2:228.

and it will make an excellent Battle.”⁴⁰ The mixed metaphors of economic abundance — “quantity,” “overplus” — and the culinary arts cast the new manufacturing culture as a failed mixture of discordant parts, something closer, that is, to Mandeville’s bowl of punch.⁴¹ This is not the picture of harmonious nature Pope claimed his own poetic corpus to be, but rather a disparate collection of meaningless and material sounds combined and priced to sell.

Part of Pope’s approach to craft poetics, then, is simply to strengthen his claim in tribute to Dryden’s translation of du Fresnoy: “Yet still how faint by precept is exprest, / The living image of the painter’s breast?”⁴² The sentiment would recur throughout Pope’s poetry in his description of his friend Hugh Bethel, “one not vers’d in schools,” as someone “strong in sense, and wise without the rules” (*Sat.* 2.2, 9–10) or in his critique of Walpole, one who “needs no Rod but Ripley with a Rule” (*B.* 18), as an example of bad taste — that is, of “starv[ing] by rules of art” (*B.* 38). One hears an echo of Dryden’s resistance to the georgic precept when Pope mockingly posits the “plain and certain *Recipe*” above as an example of how a poem may be “easily brought about by him that has *Genius*, but the skill lies in doing it without one.”⁴³ In this respect, Pope’s account of labor helps to anticipate Antonio Gramsci’s claim that “*homo faber* cannot be separated from *homo sapiens*.”⁴⁴ In deriding the easy recipe that brackets out “*Genius*,” Pope

⁴⁰ Pope, *Peri Bathos*, 230.

⁴¹ Pope indeed turns to the figure of the punch bowl in his 4-line satire, “An Inscription on a Punch Bowl,” in *the Poems of Alexander Pope*, page 472.

⁴² Quoted in William Wimsatt, “Rhetoric and Poems: Alexander Pope,” in *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1954), 183. According to Wimsatt, Temple is paraphrasing Thomas Pope Blount, *De Re Poetica* (1694). Pope, “To Mr. Jervas,” in the appendix to Charles Alphonse Du Fresnoy, *The Art of Painting*, trans. John Dryden (York, 1783), 186.

⁴³ Pope, *Peri Bathos*, 228.

⁴⁴ Gramsci, Antonio. “The Formation of the Intellectuals,” in *The Norton Anthology of Theory & Criticism*. 2nd ed., ed. Vincent B. Leitch et al. (New York: Norton, 2010), 1004.

suggests that true skill inheres in an intellectually laborious process.⁴⁵ In contrast to the de-intellectualized labor involved in following a recipe or trades manual, Pope's poetics enact the union of *episteme* and *techne* that exemplified artisanal labor in the late seventeenth century. Not simply dismissive of the mechanical arts, Pope invokes craft in response to the division of labor involved in mechanical production. Through the constant improvement of his gardens, his couplets, and every aspect of the textual medium, Pope embraces the work of craftsmanship.⁴⁶ Pope's labored poetic process works against the "easy way" toward *poiesis* by persistently claiming that labor is inextricable from thought.

The confluence of poetry and mechanical labor amounts to a direct assault on this ideal, and this is most vividly demonstrated by the world of *Peri Bathos*, in which literature is nothing more than a manufactured product. Pope's satirical inversions point continually to the world of manufacture. The speaker celebrates his home in the "Lowlands of Parnassus, the flourishing state of our Trade, and the plenty of our Manufacture" and accuses his neighbors in Upper Parnassus of having "driven the country, and carried off at once whole Cart-loads of our manufacture; to reclaim some of which stolen goods is part of the design of this Treatise."⁴⁷ The moment takes to its logical conclusion some of the latent (and manifest) elitism of Tory craft poetics. One problem with the formula, or "recipe," of the how-to manual is that it erases all

⁴⁵ Here, I take the opposite view of Beth Fowkes Tobin, who has recently argued that eighteenth-century English georgic verse "participated in the Enlightenment redefinition of knowledge as abstract and universal" (quoted in Irvine, 985).

⁴⁶ As Maynard Mack suggests, Pope's account of Homer provides an even better description of his own practice: "But may not one say Homer is in this like a skilful Improver, who places a beautiful Statue in a well-disposed Garden so as to answer several Vistas" (Pope quoted in Maynard Mack, *The Garden and the City* [Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1969], 28).

⁴⁷ Pope, *Peri Bathous*, 186–87.

hierarchies, failing to distinguish between genius and grub-street hack — a prevalent anxiety of Augustan satire from the speaker of *The Tale of Tub*'s suggestion that “the shrewdest Pieces of this Treatise, were conceived in Bed, in a Garret” to Richard Savage's Iscariot Hackney, who claims that his “Price is the Price of a Journalist, a Crown; and, in the Stile of a Love-Bargain, half-Wet, half Dry. You may find me in a Morning at my Lucubrations, over a Quartern Pot in a Geneva Shop in Clare-Market.”⁴⁸

But while Swift and Savage critique and debase Hack writers by materializing their bodies alongside their meager profits, Pope focuses instead on the materiality of the book trade to uphold social hierarchies through ridicule. While the members of lower Parnassus are almost ethereal, conspicuously absent in their corporeality, Pope targets instead texts which show their seams, literary works made mediocre by the material nature of their production. Pope makes his case clear by dilating on the division of poetic labor in Lower Parnassus.⁴⁹ Analogizing the manufacture of poetry to the work of clock-making, he writes: “One artist makes the balance, another the spring, another the crown-wheels, a fourth the case, and the principal workman puts all together.” Pope derides this approach as an altogether modern affair: “To this oeconomy,” he wryly proclaims, “we

⁴⁸ Jonathan Swift, “A Tale of a Tub,” in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, 20; Richard Savage, *An Author to be Lett. Being a proposal humbly address'd to the Consideration of the Knights, Esquires, Gentlemen, and other worshipful and weighty Members of the Solid and Ancient Society of the Bathos* (London, 1729), preface [np]. Abigail Williams writes: “Texts such as Swift's *Tale of a Tub* (1704), Gay's *Trivia* (1716), and Pope's *Peri Bathous* (1727) reiterated associations between Whiggism and bad writing, enthusiasm, illiteracy, and poverty” (*Poetry and the Creation of a Whig Literary Culture 1681–1714* [New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2005], 10); and later, “Pope goes some way towards acknowledging the changing socio-economic basis of Whig literary culture. His detailing of the activities of low-life dunces is balanced by a recurring interest in the powerful patrons who supported them. The effect of this is that Dulness is linked to both high culture and low culture, wealth and poverty” (53). For more on neoclassical satires of hack writing, see Abigail Williams, 22–55 and Pat Rogers, *Grub Street: Studies in a Subculture*, Routledge Revival Series (New York: Routledge), 2014.

⁴⁹ On the division of intellectual labor between literature and science in the georgic mode, see Kurt Heinzelman, “Roman Georgic in the Georgian Age: A Theory of Romantic Genre,” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 33 (1991): 189.

owe the perfection of our modern watches, and doubtless we also might that of our modern Poetry and Rhetoric.”⁵⁰ Invoking the figure of the clockmaker to cast rude manufacture, and the evacuation of craft labor that it requires, as a debasement of both poetry and intelligent design, Pope limits literary perfection to the work of master craftsmen like himself.

The nightmare of divided poetic labor had an important contemporary analogue in which Pope was famously well-versed: the early eighteenth-century book trade. Defoe sounds a lot like Pope describing clock-making when he announces that “Writing . . . is become a very considerable Branch of the English commerce; Composing, Inventing, Translating, &c., are the several Manufactures which supply this Commerce. The Booksellers are the Master Manufacturers or Employers. The several Writers, Authors, Copyers, Sub-Writers and all other Operators with Pen and Ink, are the Workmen employed by the said Master Manufacturers.”⁵¹ Defoe marks the introduction of writing to commerce in his account of these several “operators” involved in the trade.⁵² Ironically, Defoe’s account of the commercialization of the book trade follows from a critique of Pope’s own approach to literary manufacture. A few sentences earlier, Defoe complains of “the Clamour which has been made upon a certain Author, for publishing his Translation, or Version, of your old Friend *Homer*, under his own Name, when it seems he has not been, nay, some have had the hardiness to say, *could not have been*, the

⁵⁰ Pope, *Peri Bathous*, 224.

⁵¹ Daniel Defoe, “On Pope’s Translation of Homer,” in *Daniel Defoe: His Life, and Recently Discovered Writings: Extending from 1716–1729*, 3 vol., ed. William Lee (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1968), 3:410; also quoted in Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Cardigan: Parthian Books, 2012), 193.

⁵² Compare this to Oliver Goldsmith’s more explicitly elegiac description of “that fatal revolution whereby writing is converted to a mechanic trade” later in the century (quoted in Williams, *The Long Revolution*, 193). For Williams, and for many others, this signals the rise of the middle class.

real Operator.”⁵³ On Defoe’s account Pope’s claim to authorship has become outmoded amid new changes to literary production. Although Pope seeks to retain his status as solo craftsman of his works, Defoe highlights the very material production that Pope both painstakingly controls and feverishly eschews in order to undermine precisely such a claim.⁵⁴

Defoe might seem overly polemical in his assessment, but he was not alone in having a corporate understanding of eighteenth-century book manufacture.⁵⁵ Martha Woodmansee has for instance noted in the context of mid-eighteenth-century Germany that an author was “just one of the numerous craftsman involved in the production of the book — not superior to, but on par with other craftsmen.”⁵⁶ Woodmansee indeed takes as her epigraph an account which sounds a lot like the division of labor of *Peri Bathous* and Defoe’s letter: “Many people work on this ware before it is complete and becomes an actual book in this sense. The scholar and the writer, the papermaker, the type founder, the typesetter and the printer, the proofreader, the publisher, the book binder, sometimes even the gilder and the brass-worker, etc. Thus many mouths are fed by this branch of manufacture.”⁵⁷ As many critics have noted, Pope was eager to cast himself as the exception to this rule by taking what James McLaverty has described as “the *auteur*

⁵³ Defoe, “On Pope’s Translation of Homer,” 409–10.

⁵⁴ On Pope’s control over every aspect of the publication of his texts, see Gregori, iv and McLaverty. As Gregori suggests, Pope was often criticized through the language of craftsmanship: “Preromantic and Romantic reception found fault with what William Cowper called Pope’s ‘mechanic art’ . . . and what Coleridge referred to as ‘mechanical metre’” (vi). Even in his own time, Pope’s versification was described as “mean craft” ([Morrice] quoted in Gregori, vi).

⁵⁵ On Pope’s opportunist relation to print capitalism, see Nicholson, “The Mercantile Bard” and David Foxon, *Pope and the Early Eighteenth-Century Book Trade* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 32. Nicholson writes, “A significant element in the subsequent control Pope exercised over his copyrights was the use of less influential printers to whom he could dictate terms, thereby maximizing his personal profits” (78).

⁵⁶ Martha Woodmansee, “The Genius and the Copyright: Economic and Legal Conditions of the Emergence of the ‘Author’” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 17.4 (1984): 425–48.

⁵⁷ *Allgemeines oekonomisches Lexicon*, quoted in Woodmansee, 425.

approach to book production.”⁵⁸ Inventing this *auteur* relation to book production as a response to the manufacture of literature in *Peri Bathous* — overseeing and punctiliously managing every aspect of production — Pope sets older conceptions of craftsmanship against ascendant modes of commercialization. Skill and craft labor thus play a prominent role in Pope’s literary career, serving as key concepts in distinguishing poetry from the lower orders of literature, which materialize texts into their component parts.⁵⁹

But even while Pope placed craft labor at the center of his literary method, he also took part in a milieu that remained assiduously skeptical of political craftsmanship. An Anti-Walpole journal whose purported goal was to “expose political craft,” *The Craftsman* set out to critique the first minister for having “perfected politics as an acquired skill, one of conciliating interests and manipulating men, mean talents that stripped the glory and the gloss from politics.”⁶⁰ Crucially for the purposes of this dissertation, the oppositional journal was well known for its georgic roots. *The Craftsman* is supposed to have been conceived at Bolingbroke’s Dawley Farm, described by Joshua Nun as a place where “Enemies to the Government were always welcome.”⁶¹ Though Pope was apparently skeptical of Bolingbroke’s georgic posturing, the link between farm labor and sedition would nonetheless be crucial to his late oppositional poetry.⁶²

⁵⁸ James McLaverty, *Pope, Print, and Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001), 61.

⁵⁹ He begins *The Dunciad in Four Books*, for instance, by describing “The Cave of Poverty and Poetry” (34): “Here one poor word an hundred clenches makes, / And ductile dullness new meanders takes; / There motley Images her fancy strike, / Figures ill pair’d, and Similies unlike” (63–66).

⁶⁰ Simon Varey, *Lord Bolingbroke: Contributions to the Craftsman* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 56; Isaac Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and His Circle: The Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1992), 6. Richard Savage describes the journal in *An Author to be Let*: “Other Paragraphs more virulent against a Prime Minister (for I naturally hate my Superiors) are for my very good Friend the Craftsman” (5).

⁶¹ Joshua Nun, *Joshua Against Caleb: Or a Collection of the several writings of Caleb D’anvers, Esq* (London, 1733), 73. For more on Pope’s relation to the craftsman see Hammond, 146–48.

⁶² See Hammond, 48 on Pope’s skepticism. On the relationship between oppositional politics and landscape gardening, see Francesca Orestano, “Bust Story: Pope at Stowe,” *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 38.1 (2005): 50–55 and Morris Brownell, *Alexander Pope and the Arts of Georgian England* (Oxford:

The farm itself was an exercise in political subterfuge. While contemporaries knew that it was “a base for journalistic guerilla warfare,” Bolingbroke attempted to “camouflage [Dawley] as a working farm and ostentatiously engrossed himself in rustic pursuits”: Hammond notes for instance how in 1728 Bolingbroke “had the hall painted monochrome with farm implements, and in some rooms the paintings combined mythological figures with georgic and sylvan scenes of cupids guiding the plough.”⁶³ The figure of “camouflage” provides a nice analogy for the rhetorical strategies of the journal itself. *The Craftsman* levelled a critique against Walpole’s statecraft from the position of craftsmanship. Thus, in a letter responding to Swift about his proposed contributions to the journal, Bolingbroke invokes the persona of “the Craftsman” to substantiate his call for revision. Reminding Swift that “the Craftsman has not only advertis’d the publick that he intended to turn Newswriter [but] has begun, & for some weeks continu’d to appear under that character,” Bolingbroke asks Swift to produce “a fourth letter from the occasional writer, to account for his silence, to prosecute your argument, to state the present disputes about political affairs, & in short to revive & animate the paper war.”⁶⁴ The advice here is to move into description: to “state the present disputes” through the figure of newswriting and to use this new version of the craftsman to camouflage opposition as information. In this respect, the persona of Bolingbroke’s craftsman cuts a rather odd figure: one who uses the persona of craftsmanship in order to “expose political craft.”

Clarendon, 1978), 71–146, 214–48. Critics have read Pope’s critique of such posturing as his worry that it would obfuscate and detract from Bolingbroke’s more significant role as statesman. See Claudia Thomas Kairoff, “Living on the Margin: Alexander Pope and the Rural Ideal,” *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 38.1 (2005): 22.

⁶³ Hammond, 48.

⁶⁴ Bolingbroke to Swift, quoted in Varey, xx.

Upholding its georgic camouflage was often half the battle for the *Craftsman* journal. Its writers would regularly turn to allegories of agricultural and political management to express their oppositional critiques while avoiding accusations of libel. One *Craftsman* writer responds to the *London Journal*'s demand that political satires and libels be treated as legal offenses by turning to Horace for evidence: "the only Design of [libel]," he argues, "is to calumniate the Persons and misrepresent the Actions of Men, either in publick or private Station, for vile, wicked and unjust Purposes. Whatever therefore is written without any such *Design* and for no such Purpose, is not a Libel. But Men, whose Characters are open to Censure, call every thing, of a satirical nature a Libel."⁶⁵ This was a fairly common sentiment. Savage's Iscariot Hackney tellingly writes libel and not satire.⁶⁶ And Pope himself once claimed that there is "no greater error" than "the mistaking a *Satyr*ist for a *Libeller*"; whereas to a *true Satyr*ist nothing is so odious as a *Libeller*" (*Sat.* 2.1, page 613).⁶⁷ To distinguish between the two, writers would often turn to the language of skill and craft — terms, as I argued in the previous chapter, which were closely tied to fictionality (and *fingère*) in their shared attempts to avoid accusations of libel. One issue of the *Craftsman*, 1 July 1727, begins with the epigraph from Solomon: "The Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong; nor yet Power to Men of Understanding, nor Favour to Men of Skill," making the connection between skill and political critique.⁶⁸ And likewise narratives of tenant laborers and stewards were

⁶⁵ *The Craftsman*, 28 September 1728, quoted in Mack, 175.

⁶⁶ See Savage, 3–12.

⁶⁷ Deutsch writes, quoting Nietzsche, that "This 'whole improvement of morality' is satire's government purpose from Horace (particularly the Christianized Horace that Pope inherited through Renaissance scholarship) to Pope" (155). Satire's desired "improvement" might productively be thought in relation to Pope's recourse to positions of craft labor and georgic labor — the constant improvement of his texts mobilized as political critique.

⁶⁸ *The Craftsman*, no. 52, 1 July 1727, quoted in Varey, 13.

often deployed in anti-Walpolean satire. In this respect, *The Craftsman* often reads as political georgic.

Pope's poetry, in turn, takes up the *Craftsman*'s strategy of political obliquity. Pope himself was thought to contribute with a pamphlet entitled the *Norfolk Steward*: "We are told, that Mr. P—e wrote the Poem call'd Dawley Farm, and the *Norfolk Steward*, besides several Letters in *Fog* and the *Craftsman*." Indeed this attribution incensed several writers, one claiming for instance that "A. POPE is known to be an odd kind of Monster, a Republican Papist, and that he has written ten Fogs, and Craftsmen, is not to be doubted, by those, who remember the Norfolk Steward in Fog, &c."⁶⁹ But even more generally his oppositional poetry often turned to the *Craftsman* style. On Maynard Mack's account, in a cultural milieu in which government writers searched for libelous implications "under every plausible surface and shaped them to look like disloyalties to the throne rather than criticisms of the ministry, innuendo for both readers and writers thrived." Rather than veiling his seditious criticisms, however, Pope tended to hide his most dangerous statements in plain sight: "Political references flash casually on the unruffled surface of the verse, then disappear so swiftly that it often remains uncertain whether the satirical lens has in fact been opened, and if so, on what."⁷⁰ Never explicitly stating his grievances, he quietly insinuates them through the craft of his (sometimes "flamboyant") verse. For both Pope and the writers of *The Craftsman*, Horace became an important voice of political obliquity. Speaking of Horace's relation to the court, Pope

⁶⁹ Henley, quoted in Valey, xxi.

⁷⁰ Mack, *The Garden and the City*, 135–36. For more on the importance of surfaces to Pope's poetry, see Jonathan Lamb, *The Things Things Say* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2011), 98–126 and Mack, "'Wit and Poetry and Pope': Some Observations on His Imagery," in *Collected in Himself: Essays Critical, Biographical, and Bibliographical on Pope and Some of His Contemporaries* (East Brunswick, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1982), 37–42, 45–53.

describes the Latin poet as “An artful Manager, that crept between / His Friend and Shame, and was a kind of *Screen*.”⁷¹ Notably, “screen” was a common term for Walpole — a sign of his knack for deception, backdealing, and bribery. In this way, Pope’s dazzling surface might begin to look more like the georgic camouflage of Dawley Farm.

Pope’s poetic sprezzatura often doubles as an effective mode for evading censorship. One hears, for instance, Pope’s stylistic ideal of “graceful negligence” in Mack’s account of Pope and Walpole as both “artful managers.”⁷² Mack here quotes Harvey to describe the oppositional war: “‘Under a seeming openness and negligence, devilish artful,’ says Hervey of Walpole; and the same, as everyone knows, was true of Pope.”⁷³ This “graceful negligence” attests to one important form of artful management that runs throughout Pope’s work. Pope’s poetic and political skill lies in his laboring to seem not to labor at all, a style repeatedly mobilized in Pope’s poetic attacks upon the failed management of Walpole’s administration. As Mack put it, “Pope had declared war — for reasons that will probably never be clear to us and may not have been so to him — with the portrait of Timon in the *Epistle to Burlington* and with the network of allusions to governmental fraud in the *Epistle to Bathurst*.”⁷⁴ In casting Walpole as a landowner, as a politician who replaced labor with money, Pope most often leveled his attacks by

⁷¹ “Dialogue I” of *The Epilogue to the Satires*, in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, lines 21–22.

⁷² Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, line 653. The full couplet reads: “*Horace* still charms with graceful Negligence, / and without Method *talks* us into Sense” (653–54). Pope takes up the figure of sprezzatura, or laboring to seem not to labor, throughout his career, writing earlier in the poem: “True Ease in Writing comes from Art, not Chance, / As those move easiest who have learn’d to dance” (362–63). I will return to these lines, and Pope’s telling invocation of skill and chance, in the next chapter.

⁷³ Mack, *The Garden and the City*, 202. Warton writes of this couplet: “The vulgar notion, that Horace wrote his *Epistle to the Pisos* without method, has been lately confuted, as we hinted before. It is equally false that, that epistle contains a complete Art of Poetry; it being solely confined to the state and defects of the Roman drama” (*Essay on the Writings and Genius of Alexander Pope*, 3rd ed. [London, 1764], 134).

⁷⁴ Mack, *The Garden and the City*, 172.

making “skill” the privileged term of critique. Pope would in turn hone his own skill for creating a quietly damaging satire through Horace and through his exposure to *The Craftsman*. He would develop, in other words, what he elsewhere called “[t]he last and greatest Art, the Art to blot” (*Ep.* 2.1, 281). Often speaking in general references and establishing innuendo by disclaiming it, writers of *The Craftsman* epitomized Pope’s pronouncement in *The Epistle to Burlington* that “half the skill is decently to hide” (*B.* 54). In the medium of Pope’s poetics, *The Craftsman* rhetoric offered an ideal tool with which one could condemn the “little skill” of Walpole’s politics with a skilled rhetorical hand. And these strategies were only strengthened by postures of rural labor and craftsmanship. Moving from management of estates to the management of states, Pope mobilizes skill as a mode of political critique. He reclaims practical skill for the opposition.

In attempting to uphold distinctions between satire and libel in his own work, Pope in fact returns to the figure of chiasmus. Consider for instance the claim to political moderation which I discussed in brief earlier:

In Moderation placing all my Glory,
While Tories call me Whig, and Whigs a Tory.
Satire’s my Weapon, but I’m too discreet
To run a Muck, and tilt at all I meet;
I only wear it in a Land of Hectors,
Thieves, Supercargoes, Sharpers, and Directors.
(*Sat.* 1.2, 67–73)

Holding to Horace’s initial distinction between satire and libel, Pope describes satire in terms of his own strategic selection of political battles. In this moment chiasmus offers a useful vehicle for that “art to blot” or what he describes in *The Epistle to Burlington* as the “skill” of being able “decently to hide” (*B.* 54). Read in these terms, the chiasmus that

I took above to be a depoliticized version of Horace's original begins to sound more like a politicized version of an often complacent mode. As a version of "discreetness," Pope's moderate chiasmus allows him to stay in the world of satire (not libel), only reacting to the corrupt "Land of Hectors, . . . Sharpers, and Directors" in which he lives. While for Pope, satire is what makes poetry more than mere manufacture, this posture of craftsmanship, in turn, helps develop the political obliquity needed to divest one's work of its potentially libelous status.

Taking craft as a key formal strategy for sedition, Pope is then able to criticize a corrupt Walpole administration on precisely such terms. His composite portrait of Timon offers one oblique yet scathing view of Walpole as a false manager and political heir. Walpole is something of an odd case within the history of political administration, an example of a political figure who was considered by many to be less the first Prime Minister than the last "royal favorite."⁷⁵ What some took to be a dangerous mixture of older modes of inheritance and new moneyed politics was most effectively depicted in Pope's portrait of Timon in *The Epistle to Burlington*. Timon's villa offers an almost direct assault on Locke's idea that "as much as any one can make use of to any advantage of life before it spoils; so much may he by his labour fix a Property in. What ever is beyond this, is more than his share, and belongs to others."⁷⁶ As the picture of such waste or "spoils" — "Where all cry out, 'What sums are thrown away!'" (*B*, 100) — the villa acts as the moral counter example of Pope's epistle "on the use of riches."⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Mack, *Garden and the City*, 129.

⁷⁶ John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988), 290.

⁷⁷ Noggle describes this as the established critical view, which he refines through J. G. A. Pocock's terminology: "Burlington's taste, at least as Pope portrays it, reflects the independent virtue of the civic humanist, while Timon's bears all the marks of a commercial, market-driven man" ("Taste and Temporality in *An Epistle to Burlington*," *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 38.1 [2005]: 117). On the

At Timon's Villa let us pass a day,
 Where all cry out, 'What sums are thrown away!'
 So proud, so grand; of that stupendous air,
 Soft and Agreeable come never there.
 Greatness, with Timon, dwells in such a draught
 As brings all Brobdignag before your thought.
 To compass this, his building is a Town,
 His pond an Ocean, his parterre a Down:
 Who but must laugh, the Master when he sees,
 A puny insect shiv'ring at a breeze!
 Lo, what huge heaps of littleness around!
 The whole, a labour'd Quarry above ground.
(B, 99–110)

The scene's "huge heaps of littleness" appear to do precisely the opposite work of Pope's aesthetics, which tirelessly labor to seem not to have labored at all. (Pope would indeed return to the image in his critique of laureate poetics, which "heaps up nothing but mere metre" [*Ep.* 2.1, 198].) This figure for waste and conspicuous consumption cannot but show the seams of Timon's nonexistent work, the many disparate pieces of the scene appearing instead as "a labour'd quarry above the ground." An image of needless Brobdignagian excess and a nightmare of property without labor, Timon's villa levels an incisive critique against Walpole's politics.⁷⁸ In contrast to the neoclassical principle of

many figures Timon could stand for, see James R. Aubrey, "Timon's Villa: Pope's Composite Picture," *Studies in Philology* 80.3 (1983): 325–48; Kathleen Mahaffey, "Timon's Villa: Walpole's Houghton," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 9.2 (1967): 193–222; and George Sherburn, "'Timon's Villa' and Cannons" *The Huntington Library Bulletin* 8 (1935): 131–52.

⁷⁸ On Mack's account the reference to Swift was likely meant to remind us of the "gargantuan character of Houghton and the greed and corruption of its owner" (Mack, *The Garden and the City*, 172). See also his account of the correspondence between Pope and Lord Bathurst: "The Lilliputian scale of the poet's domain at Twickenham, reflecting his own proportions, became particularly a subject of jest between him and Lord Bathurst, whose holdings at Cirencester in Gloucestershire were vast" (26). As Richards has helpfully suggested, part of this problem of scale is that elements of the garden have become impossible to use because they are much too vast to function: "It is too expensive even for Timon to keep the fountain continually supplied with water, and the sea-horse mourns because he is dry and out of his proper element" ("Pope's Epistle to Burlington 119–26," *The Explicator* 45.2 [1987]: 17).

unity that Pope uses to describe “True Art,” Timon’s Villa is less than the sum of its parts.⁷⁹

Throughout his career, Pope insists on casting bad craftsmanship as a sign of bad politics. This might be said to culminate in the “falling arts” at the end of the *Epistle to Burlington*. “Falling arts” here refer to all of the crumbling churches, highways, turnpikes, and bridges which, Pope writes in his original footnote, “were vilely executed, thro’ fraudulent cabals between undertakers, officers, &c.” (*B*, 595n). Though Walpole is never explicitly named, readers would have known to whom Pope was referring. But Pope also deploys this strategy in his peculiar account of tenant labor, a crucial posture from which to critique the contemporary political state of affairs. In doing so he brings skill and craft to bear on agricultural improvement:

Who then shall grace, or who improve the Soil?
Who plants like BATHURST, or who builds like BOYLE?
'Tis Use alone that sanctifies Expence,
And Splendor borrows all her rays from Sense.
His Father's Acres who enjoys in peace,
Or makes his Neighbours glad, if he encrease;
Whose cheerful Tenants bless their yearly toil,
Yet to their Lord owe more than to the soil[.]
(*B*, 177–84)

Pope here takes the tenant’s labor as the locus of skill for his anti-Walpolean ideal. In contrast to the landowner who possesses property in name and yet makes no use of it, the tenant farmer — forced to work for the “Lord” rather than the soil — actively manages and uses the land he rents, exemplifying Pope’s understanding of skill. This new image of property without use indeed offers something like a negative version of Pope’s economic

⁷⁹ In his correction to interpretations of Timon’s villa, Richards makes the apt claim that “in his [Pope’s] eye there is something curiously foolish about statues in this decorative setting, an absurd collocation of the arts of peace and war” (17).

theodicy. Here “sanctifying Expense” and “bless[ing] yearly toil,” not to mention the pun on landlord, suggest a debasement of rather than a resorting to providential claims.⁸⁰ Contemporary politics begins to look like a realm that pretends to skill and yet never satisfies the test of “use” or labor that sanctifies expense.

In taking aim at the “lord” to whom tenants “owe more than to the soil,” Pope situates his oppositional poetics in relation to contemporary changes in agricultural capitalism. Around the time that the *Epistle to Burlington* was written in the 1730s, the price of agricultural products had decreased drastically from what it had been in the 1680s while eighteenth-century property values and fees almost doubled. Whereas landowners used to stay on the land and make their profits from working it directly, the tripartite landlord–tenant–laborer system had begun to prevail by the time *Burlington* was written.⁸¹ This meant that while toward the end of the seventeenth century Locke could define property as the mixing of one’s labor with land to give it value, by the time of Pope’s late poetry that notion was fast becoming outmoded. It also meant that there was an increasing distance between the labor of the land and profit. As Marx puts it in his account of the “Trinity Formula,” the relationship between capital, land, and labor is like that between “a lawyer’s fees, beetroot and music.”⁸² Stephen Duck would vividly

⁸⁰ On the persistence of the great chain of being well into the seventeenth and early eighteenth century see Barry Coward, *Social Change and Continuity: England 1550–1750* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

⁸¹ Robert Brenner and Raymond Williams have traced this shift in the transition from an emphasis on the Landlord–Peasant–Laborer relationship toward one on the tenant–peasant laborer relationship. Brenner writes, “In particular, the rise of the landlord/capitalist tenant/wage-labourer system provided the basis for the transformation of agriculture and, in turn, the breakthrough to the ongoing economic development which took place in early modern England” (Robert Brenner, “The Agrarian Roots of European Capitalism,” *Past & Present* 97 [1982]: 18). Raymond Williams has described the historical shift towards a “new aristocratic class” (*The Country and the City* [Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1975], 58), suggesting that “The genius of the place” in the *Epistle to Burlington* is “its owner, its proprietor, its improver” referring to Charles Cotton (123).

⁸² Karl Marx, *Capital*, 3 vol., trans. David Fernbach (London: Penguin, 1991), 3:953.

express this increasing distance in his account of being given orders by a tenant farmer who “guess[es] thence the profits of the Year.”⁸³ Pope, on the other hand, positions himself as a tenant subjected to a landlord who knows nothing of his property. In this respect, his pun on “lord” offers a particularly damaging view of Timon’s poor taste and poor political management. Pope’s labor theory of poetry begins to position itself directly opposite to changes in agricultural production as well as political administration.

These changes do not incite in Pope a reactionary nostalgia, however. Whereas Dryden’s craft poetics had attempted to maintain the older order of primogeniture — a practice in which, as an eldest son and gentleman, Dryden had a vested interest — Pope, the son of a merchant, a Catholic forced to live outside of London and unable legally to own land, was excluded from any such tradition. “My lands are sold, my Father’s house is gone[,]” he writes in his *Second Satire of the Second Book of Horace Paraphrased*, “I’ll hire another’s, is not that my own, / And yours, my friends? thro’ whose free-opening gate / None comes too early, none departs too late” (*Sat.* 2.2, 155–58).⁸⁴ Forced into a position of renting rather than owning land, Pope is especially critical of a mode of property ownership that was becoming increasingly dissociated from labor and use. For most readers of the eighteenth century, this makes Pope hold even more strongly to traditional notions of landed politics: Robert Irvine has for instance argued that Pope works to extricate labor from the commercial networks in which it had been placed by Locke to “employ it in the celebration of a political order based on land” and Rachel Crawford has described early georgic in terms of “the form’s aristocratic bias, its

⁸³ Stephen Duck, *The Thresher’s Labour* (London: The Merlin Press, 1989), 1.

⁸⁴ On Pope’s interest in the management of estates, see Gregori, xxvii.

gentrification rather than accurate portrayal of labor.”⁸⁵ This influential narrative relies on a stark division between land and money, however, and land is not so easily extricated from money in Pope’s poetic world. As historians have well established, land becomes capital in the eighteenth century, a shift from traditional notions of land as a mode of “substance[,] self-sufficiency and as a source of privilege” toward the emergent idea of land as “capital investment for profit-making.”⁸⁶ To be a landed poet (that longstanding shorthand used to describe Scriblerians like Pope and Swift) can no longer mean the same thing in Pope’s late work. Through the work of craftsmanship, the values of country and city, land and money, are thought together in a way rarely allowed for by eighteenth-century criticism. Pope is careful to distinguish between a skillful relation to the land and the older modes of inheritance to which he is too often thought to adhere. Taking seriously the role of the capitalist tenant, his later oppositional texts further mobilize claims to literary and agrarian craftsmanship in order to undermine modes of nominal property ownership.⁸⁷

Pope’s understanding of agrarian property in many ways follows logically from his account of the value of literature in *Peri Bathous*. *The Second Satire of the Second Book* concludes with Pope bringing his critique of property to bear on his account of a useful poetics, the perspective of which I have been referring to as craftsmanship:

⁸⁵ Irvine, 963–88; Rachel Crawford, *Poetry, Enclosure, and the Vernacular Landscape, 1700–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), 97.

⁸⁶ Neal Wood, *The Politics of Locke’s Philosophy: A Social Study of An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1983), 9.

⁸⁷ John Gay suggestively describes Pope as a laborer at the beginning of his own *Epistle to the Right Honourable the Earl of Burlington*: “While you, my Lord, bid stately Piles ascend, / Or in your Chiswick Bow’rs enjoy your Friend; / Where *Pope* unloads the Bough within his reach, / The purple Grape, blue Plumb, or blushing Peach” (“An Epistle to the Right Honourable Earl of Burlington,” in *John Gay: Poetry and Prose*, ed. Vinton A. Dearing [Oxford: Clarendon, 1974], 1–4). This is in conjunction with a critique of the landlord: “At *Hartley-Row* the foaming Bit we prest, / While the fat Landlord welcom’d ev’ry Guest” (Gay, 23–24).

'Pray heav'n it last! (cries Swift) as you go on;
 I wish to God this house had been your own:
 Pity! to build, without a son or wife:
 Why, you'll enjoy it all your life.'--
 Well, if the Use be mine, can it concern one
 Whether the Name belong to Pope or Vernon?
 What's *Property*? dear Swift! you see it alter
 From you to me, from me to Peter Walter;
 Or, in a mortgage, prove a Lawyer's share,
 Or, in a jointure, vanish from the Heir,
 Or in pure Equity (the Case not clear)
 The Chanc'ry takes your rents for twenty year:
 At best, it falls to some ungracious Son,
 Who cries, my father's damn'd, and all's my own.
(Sat. 2.2, 161–74)

In accounting for different forms of property, Pope entertains no notions of the divide between land and money. His pun on the homonym “heir”/ “air” instead uses the language of contemporary finance to level a critique against landed institutions.⁸⁸ Many works of the New Economic criticism have acknowledged that the rise of credit and monetary exchange was thought to introduce fictional and immaterial, rather than real, values to economic transactions.⁸⁹ Defoe thus observed that credit “will make money without an instinsick, without the material medica, (as Doctors have it;) it adds a value, and supports whatever value it adds, to the meanest substance; it makes paper pass for money, and fills the Exchequer and the Banks with as many millions as it pleases, upon

⁸⁸ For historical context on Pope's relation to the rise of finance, see Howard Erskine-Hill, “Pope and the Financial Revolution,” in *Writers and Their Background: Alexander Pope*, ed. Peter Dixon (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1972), 200–29 and *The Social Milieu of Alexander Pope: Lives, Example, and The Poetic Response* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1975), 166–203.

⁸⁹ For this language in the new economic criticism, see Sean Moore “The Culture of Paper Credit: The New Economic Criticism and the Postcolonial Eighteenth Century,” *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 45.1 (2004): 87–95. Hume begins “Of Money” with a claim about Money's instrumental nature: “Money is not, properly speaking, one of the subjects of commerce; but only the instrument, which men have agreed upon to facilitate the exchange of one commodity for another. 'Tis none of the wheels of trade: 'Tis the oil which renders the motion of the wheels more smooth and easy” (David Hume, “Of Money,” in *Political Discourses* [London, 1752], 41). See also *The Epistle to Bathurst* for the speaker's wish for visible, “bulky Bribes” instead of paper money (35).

demand.”⁹⁰ Pope’s homonym recalls the oft-cited lines of the *Epistle to Bathurst*, written a few years earlier, “Blest paper-credit! last and best supply! / That lends Corruption lighter wings to fly! / Gold imp’d by thee, can compass hardest things, / Can pocket States, can fetch or carry Kings.”⁹¹ Further alluding to property’s lightness with the anaphoric “or” which suggests the impermanence, arbitrariness, and fungibility of property, Pope assigns to traditional understandings of landed inheritance the fragility and ephemerality of the world of financial credit.

The historical shift from notions of land as substance to those of land as capital thus plays a central role in Pope’s oppositional strategy. Indeed, the association of “Lawyer’s Shares” with the new fungibility of property seems almost to anticipate the “lawyer’s fees” of Marx’s Trinity Formula. And here as in *The Epistle to Burlington*, Pope takes his own method of craft labor to level his critique.⁹² The uncharacteristic off-rhymes from the passage above — “Well, if the Use be mine, can it concern one / Whether the Name belong to Pope or Vernon?” — sound almost Swiftian, a formal acknowledgement of his poem’s interlocutor.⁹³ With a brief departure from his own style, Pope lays bare the device to perform ostentatiously the labor now missing from property. He interrupts his own virtuosic form to enact the very problem with modern political and economic landlords.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ *The Complete English Tradesman* (London, 1726).

⁹¹ Pope, *Epistle to Bathurst*, in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, lines 69–72.

⁹² According to James McLaverty, one of the earliest instances of Pope’s refutation of conventional notions of property is made in conjunction with literary reputation in *The Temple of Fame*: “How vain that second life in others breath, / Th’estate which wits inherit after death” (Pope, quoted in McLaverty 74).

⁹³ For more on Swift’s doggerel rhymes, see Howard Erskine-Hill, “Swift’s ‘Knack at Rhyme,’” in *Sustaining Literature: Essays on Literature, History, and Culture, 1500–1800*, ed. Greg Clingham and Simon Varey (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2007), 137–54. The “knack” in his title suggests connotations of trade and labor, which I draw out further in the next chapter on Swift.

⁹⁴ For more on labor as an eighteenth-century defense of literary copyright, see Simon Stern, “From Author’s Right to Property Right,” *University of Toronto Law Journal* 62.1 (2012): 29–91.

In seeking a middle ground for landed and moneyed interests, Pope places a strong emphasis on the management of his texts, as well as of estates in his poetry.⁹⁵ His punctilious approach to the book trade has offered one important context for the importance of management to his work, but the position of manager gains even more explicit precedence in his account of poetics. Claiming in his *Preface to the Iliad* that “Invention” is only that which “furnishes Art with all her Materials, and without it Judgment itself can at best but *steal wisely*,” he writes: “Art is only like a prudent Steward that lives on managing the Riches of Nature.”⁹⁶ And in a line from *An Essay on Criticism*, one which John Dennis found important and irritating enough to repeat three times in his response to the poem, Pope writes, “There are whom Heav’n hath bless’d with store of Wit, / Yet want as much again to manage it.”⁹⁷ By framing the art of poetry in terms of aesthetic management and stewardship, Pope positions his aesthetics as a way of supporting and enacting the new agrarian capitalism of tenantry. Pushing back against the rise of commercial literary manufacture and yet wanting to leave older traditions of property inheritance in the past, Pope proclaims that true literary skill does not come from the raw material of “Wit” but rather the labor needed to maintain and “manage it.”

Thus, the final lines of *The Second Satire*, “Let Lands and Houses have what Lords they will, / Let Us be fix’d, and our own Masters still,” make a much more active

⁹⁵ See Karen Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity and Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012), 24–65 for an historical account of management in the context of oeconomy and the household.

⁹⁶ Pope, *The Poems of Alexander Pope: Translations of Homer in The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope*, 11 vol., ed. John Butt and Maynard Mack (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1967), 7:3.

⁹⁷ Pope, quoted in John Dennis, *Reflections Critical and Satyrical, upon a late Rhapsody, Call’d, An Essay Upon Criticism* (London, 1711), 11. The lines quoted in Dennis are from a different version of the poem than the one which is now standard. The Twickenham edition reads instead: “Some, to whom Heav’n in Wit has been profuse, / Want as much more, to turn it to its use” (80–81). The proximate importance of “use” and “management” is suggestive for the purposes of this chapter.

political claim than their submissive language would seem to suggest.⁹⁸ Pope's repetition of the polyvalent "Let" holds both senses of "to allow" and its opposite, which according to the *OED* remains current until the late nineteenth century, "to hinder, prevent, obstruct, stand in the way of," as well as its contextually appropriate nominal form of "[a] letting for hire or rent."⁹⁹ Savage's *An Author to be Let* invokes the latter sense to define hack writing as the renting out of oneself. Feigning a posture of submission, Pope exploits the multiple senses of "let" to critique traditions of land ownership, even while the words of his couplet seem to comply. Claiming to "let" matters remain as they will, he undermines the older order of property inheritance. This version of satirical obliquity, in which Pope makes seditious claims through a posture of submission, begins to offer something of a response to the paradox of his quietest theodicy. Pope's revised understanding of the centrality of labor to relations of property allows for him to critique the figure of the landlord from a place of seeming acceptance.

We can thus begin to see how the Pope implied by "whatever is, is right" might be reconciled with the more clamorous Pope of the satires — a Pope whose oppositional poetics critiques the state, property, and patronage. Though often taken to be a more cautious reaction to the controversy sparked by *Burlington* and *Bathurst*, Pope's *Horatian Imitations* marry political moderation with seditious politics.¹⁰⁰ By instantiating his

⁹⁸ Pope, *Second Satire of the Second Book of Horace Paraphrased*, in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, lines 179–80. McLaverty reads these lines as a rethinking of property: "literary property reveals the conventional nature of real property" (155).

⁹⁹ *OED*, s.v. "let, v.," 1, 1a; v.2, 1a; n.2.

¹⁰⁰ See Mack for his account of Pope's "pursuit of politics from the vantage of retirement" (*The Garden and the City*, 116). Earlier in the same text, he describes Twickenham as a place he could "set against the world beyond the thicket which hedged his property (the world of stratagem and compromise and money-grubbing and self-interest — into which he often entered because he had to and because it answered the vein of stratagem and compromise and self-interest in his own nature), an imagined ideal community of patriarchal virtues and heroic friends" (66). I hope to revise such understandings of Pope's retreat by suggesting that there is an inherent politics to this posture which he cultivates through his aesthetic mode.

political critique in the form rather than the content of his poetry — that is, through the skill and craft of the georgic mode rather than explicit statement — Pope achieves something close to the reticent sedition of Dryden’s *Georgics*.¹⁰¹ Looking to *The Craftsman*, as both political georgic and Horatian exemplum, for a rhetorical strategy, Pope develops his own evasive satire by delineating his poetic craft from the flawed political craftsmanship of contemporary government. Recall, for instance, the lines from his *Epistle to Bolingbroke*, in which Pope ostensibly steps back from political conflict:¹⁰²

Sometimes a Patriot, active in debate,
Mix with the World, and battle for the State,
Free as young Lyttleton, her cause pursue,
Still true to Virtue, and as warm as true:
Sometimes with Aristippus or St. Paul,
Indulge my Candor, and grow all to all;
Back to my native Moderation slide,
And win my way by yielding to the tyde.
(*Ep.* 1.1, 27–34)

Ambivalently moving between political engagement and passive retreat, Pope’s final claim to moderation cannot be read simply at its word.¹⁰³ The phrase “back to my native Moderation slide” recalls his politicization of craft in *The Epistle to Burlington*: “Still follow Sense, of ev’ry Art the Soul, / Parts answ’ring parts shall slide into a whole” (*B*, 65–66). Refusing to give way to the flow of the tides, Pope links such “moderation” to the artfully managed sprezzatura he strove to cultivate throughout his poetic career. Indeed, as his *First Satire of the Second Book of Horace* suggests, such sliding isn’t

¹⁰¹ For debates surrounding Pope’s poetry of statement, see Maynard Mack, “Wit and Poetry and Pope,” 37–41 and J. Paul Hunter, “Formalism and History.”

¹⁰² He writes a few lines earlier: “Farewell then Verse, and Love, and ev’ry toy, / The rhymes and rattles of the Man or Boy” (17–18).

¹⁰³ During this time moderation held an important connection to passive obedience. See, for instance, Henry Sacheverell, *Moderation made visible* (London, 1710), which discusses his “avowed Principle to maintain the Doctrines of *Passive Obedience* and *Non-Resistance* to the government of the Kings and Queens of *Great Britain*” (1).

necessarily politically innocuous: “Who-e’er offends, at some unlucky Time / Slides into Verse, and hitches in a Rhyme.” (*Sat.* 2.1, 77–78). The seemingly random, perhaps even Lucretian, sliding of parts into wholes and people into their moderate tendencies is instead an exercise in his *Craftsman* style of aesthetics, “where half the skill is decently to hide.”

Pope’s most clamorous satires are often also his most moderate, as he mobilizes craft through the politics and aesthetics of his work. As innuendo flashes on the surface of Pope’s text, we see the influence of craftsmanship on his poetic skill and on the relation between form and politics in his poetry. Pope demonstrates this strategy with his somewhat perplexing imperative, “Know, all the distant Din that World can keep / Rolls o’er my *Grotto*, and but soothes my Sleep” (*Sat.* 2.1, 123–23). He is not simply divesting himself of responsibility to political action but is offering instead a reassessment of effective oppositional politics from a position of apparent disenfranchisement.¹⁰⁴ The lines then migrate toward the political margins of society: “There, my Retreat the best Companions grace, / Chiefs, out of War, and Statesmen, out of Place. / There *St. John* mingles with my friendly Bowl, / The Feast of Reason and the Flow of Soul” (*Sat.* 2.1, 125–28). Even while Pope claims to be sleeping through politics, his grotto here almost begins to sound like Dawley Farm, a place where “Enemies to the Government were always welcome.” What at first seems the location for moderate compliance is here instead a place where those political figures “out of War” and “out of Place” might well begin to organize.

¹⁰⁴ For accounts of Pope’s vexed position on the margins of society, see Kairoff, 15–38 and Gregori, vi–xi.

As Pope is at pains to remind his readers, Walpolean statecraft is no substitute for the work of providence. Pope's approach to theodicy and *concordia discors* would often provide useful vehicles for such a demonstration. The description of the universe as a "mighty Maze! but not without a plan" recalls Leibniz's claim that God is the ideal artist:

If we look at a very beautiful picture but cover all of it but a tiny spot, what more will appear in it, no matter how closely we study it, indeed, all the more, the more closely we examine it, than a confused mixture of colors without beauty and without art. Yet when the covering is removed and the whole painting is viewed from a position that suits it, we come to understand what seemed to be a thoughtless smear on the canvas has really been done with the highest artistry of the creator of the work.¹⁰⁵

By registering dissonances to such cosmic harmony, Pope is able to craft an oblique criticism of Walpolean statecraft while exonerating himself from accusations of libel.¹⁰⁶

Through his posture of craftsmanship, Pope expresses political dissent in the form of his poetics without needing to state his claims. Timon's villa might well read as a direct assault on this picture of optimism, as it distorts the relation between part and whole.

Rather than casting itself as part of a larger whole, the villa "brings all Brobdignag before your Thought": "On gilded clouds in fair expansion lie, / And bring all Paradise before your eye" (*B*, 147–48). The expansive pride of Timon's villa violates all orders of architectural, moral, and cosmic harmony.

Pope's political chiasmus might then be thought to strengthen his oppositional satire rather than his economic complacency, and it's in this respect that we can begin to

¹⁰⁵ G. W. Leibniz, *The Monadology*, trans. George R. Montgomery (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2005), 489.

¹⁰⁶ For more on Pope's relation to Leibniz, see Dennis Todd, "'One vast egg': Leibniz, the New Embryology, and Pope's 'Dunciad,'" *English Language Notes* 26.4 (1989): 24–41 and Dennis Danielson, "The Logic of Pope's Optimism," *Christianity and Literature* 34.3 (1985): 23–36.

read his deist theodicy as a mode of political dissidence. Timon's Villa, indeed, offers a distorted image of balance:

No pleasing Intricacies intervene,
No artful wildness to perplex the scene;
Grove nods at grove, each Alley has a brother,
And half the platform just reflects the other.
The suffering eye inverted Nature sees,
Trees cut to Statues, Statues thick as Trees.
(*B*, 115–20)

The scene conveys an uneasiness in its attempts at chiasmic balance — one not that unlike the opening few lines of Leapor's *Essay on Woman*. While groves nod at each other, alleys come in pairs, and platforms are placed in mirror-like opposition, Pope's lines seem to offer some truth to Hogarth and Burke's conclusions that proportion fails as an adequate marker of beauty.¹⁰⁷ This issue culminates in the confounding depiction of "Trees cut to statues, statues thick as trees," a chiasmus that runs into excess — the "thick as trees" not implying any fashioning as in the previous "cut to" but rather marking their sheer numerousness. And yet for all this profligacy, Pope maintains, there's no "artful wildness" to the estate. In contradistinction to Leibniz's "thoughtless smear" done with the highest divine artistry, Timon offers a lifeless, impossibly balanced excessive whole. Pope may well maintain his chiasmic optimism in his larger poetic method, but there certainly remains a sense that something isn't quite "right."

¹⁰⁷ See William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, ed. Ronald Paulson (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1997), 59–75; see Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful*, ed. Paul Guyer (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2015), 73–84; Critics have assigned this idea to Pope himself through moral sense philosophers, like Shaftesbury, who take virtue as a fixed standard: "Let Mens Fancy prove ever so barbarous, or their Fashions ever so *Gothick* in their Architecture, Sculpture, or whatever other designing Art. 'Tis the same case, where *Life* and MANNERS are concern'd. *Virtue* has the same fix'd Standard. The same *Numbers Harmony*, and *Proportion* will have place in MORALS; and are discoverable in the *Characters and Affections* of Mankind" (*Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, 2nd ed., 3 vol. [London, 1714], 1:353). See Mack, *The Garden and the City*, 34–35 for his account of this quotation in relation to Pope's ethics.

When John Dennis accuses Pope's poetry of being "more dismal than the *Italian Opera*," asserting, "both that and the Essay are but sounds; but that is Harmony, and this is Discord," then, he in fact touches on a formal aspect that would become central to Pope's oppositional poetics.¹⁰⁸ In Pope's dissonant use of chiasmus, however, the poet levels a political and economic critique of a new, newly pervasive aesthetics that should be "but sound" but instead threatens to effect much more. Hence the dissonances of Pope's formal economy. He writes in *The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace Imitated*, "The blessing thrills thro' all the lab'ring throng, / And Heav'n is won by violence of Song" (*Ep.* 2.1, 239–40). (And here we might recall Timon's "labor'd quarry" above.) The lines don't exactly do the same work as Dryden's haunting conceit that "Music shall Untune the Sky"; rather, Pope's "violence of song" trades on paradox and disharmony to level his political critique.¹⁰⁹ Leibniz in fact makes the same argument for optimism by taking his example as music: "And what the eyes discover in a painting, the ears discover in music. The most distinguished composers often mix dissonances with smooth harmonies in order to arouse the listener — to disturb him, as it were — so that he will be momentarily anxious about what is to happen, and will feel all the more pleasure when order is restored."¹¹⁰ In this respect, such seemingly optimistic chiasmus as "whatever is, is right" are not so much signs of economic complacency as they are indexical of economic and theological dissent.

Such neoclassical harmony becomes an important hinge of moral and political critique for Pope. Through his invocation of chiasmus and *concordia discors*, Pope does

¹⁰⁸ Dennis, *Reflections Critical and Satyrical, upon a late Rhapsody, Call'd, An Essay Upon Criticism*, 11.

¹⁰⁹ John Dryden, *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day*, in *The Works of John Dryden*, 20 vol., ed. Earl Roy Miner and Vinton A. Dearing (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1969), 3:line 63.

¹¹⁰ Leibniz, 489.

not simply accept things as they are, but rather uses these moral structures of harmony in a more oblique, more pervasive, mode of dissent. As Joseph Warton reminds us in his essay on Pope, there has been a long tradition claiming that bad politics preclude good art: “SHAFTESBURY proceeds to observe, that when despotism was fully established, not a statue, picture, or medal, not a tolerable piece of architecture, afterwards appeared. — And it was, I may add, the opinion of Longinus, and Addison, who adopted it from him, that arbitrary governments were pernicious to the fine arts, as well as to the sciences.”¹¹¹ Pope extends this claim by yoking questions of politics and craftsmanship, asserting that the central issue with Timon’s Villa is that it maintains a stark division between the two — the “lavish cost and little skill” of political favorites and landowners alike. Warton’s claim, indeed, almost anticipates Walter Benjamin’s later chiasmus on the issue of politics and art: “Mankind, which in Homer’s time was an object of contemplation for the Olympian gods, now is one for itself. Its self-alienation has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order. This is the situation of politics which Facism is rendering aesthetic. Communism responds by politicizing art.”¹¹² Where for Benjamin, aesthetics are politicized through “estrangement,” through “ruins and debris,” through the “decay of the aura,” in Pope it is through an art made to seem artless that politics engages contemporary form.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Warton, 140.

¹¹² Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 242.

¹¹³ Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 230, 236, 222. An important effect of what Benjamin describes is that it divorces us from our habits: “The distracted person, too, can form habits. More, the ability to master certain tasks in a state of distraction proves that their solution has become a matter of habit. Distraction as provided by art presents a covert control of the extent to which new tasks have become soluble by apperception. Since, moreover, individuals are tempted to avoid such tasks, art will tackle the most difficult and most important ones where it is able to mobilize the masses” (240). He writes similarly of film: “By close-ups of the things around us, by focusing on hidden details of familiar objects, by exploring commonplace milieus under the ingenious guidance of the camera, the film, on the one hand, extends our comprehension of the

The neoclassical poet was responding to another, dangerously pervasive aestheticization of politics in the work of laureate poetics. By expressing aesthetic, and cosmic, unity in his corpus, Pope levels a critique against a politics that supplants skill with bribery and finance. In this moment of early capital, Pope casts Benjamin's chiasmus in very different terms through a critique of laureate politics, which renders art in its constituent parts rather than cultivating an image of unity.¹¹⁴ More than an instance of neoclassical nostalgia, however, Pope's critique of a literature rendered in parts admits an even deeper worry about the status of meaning in works of art that show their allegiances to the party in power. As he suggests, poetry that flatters renders texts as mere products of manufacture; it severs sound from sense in the new laureate economy. For Pope, a poet famous for his painstaking management of every step in the process of textual production, a poet who worked assiduously to control poetic and political meaning, there could be no greater literary threat.

In recasting definitions of a politicized aesthetics to suit his own literary claims, Pope had much to gain both politically and economically. Dissociating himself from a new economic order of which he was necessarily a participant and imbuing labor with an importance based on his personal situation, Pope crafted his poetic world with an agenda. The tactical formalism necessary to enact that agenda helps to tell a different story about the relation between politics and aesthetics in the neoclassical period, however. Pope's

necessities which rule our lives; on the other hand, it manages to assure us of an immense and unexpected field of action" (236).

¹¹⁴ In part, this distinction may have to do with a shift in focus from the textual object — the labor of the artist — to that text's reception — the labor of the viewer. Although I cannot go into the aesthetic and historical implications of this shift more fully here, other critics have. See, for instance, Abigail Zitin, "Thinking Like an Artist: Hogarth, Diderot, and the Aesthetics of Technique," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 46.4 (2013): 555–70 and Ronald Paulson, *Breaking and Remaking: Aesthetic Practice in England, 1700–1820* (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1989).

formal instantiation of labor allows for him to enact oppositional critique in the evasive language of georgic craftsmanship. For Pope, craft labor is not something to be represented by poetic content — as later georgic writers might demand — but rather that which is effaced (by the most skillful literary hands) from aesthetic surfaces. In Pope's hands poetry is most politically dangerous when it appears the most compliant: "flamboyant," not unlike du Pan's rhetoric, but also incendiary.

Chapter 3: Swift, Anti-Formalism, and the Georgics of the South Sea

Well before georgic poetry became grounded in agricultural labor — in nation-building and the shaping of swords back into scythes — Hesiod’s *Works and Days* placed the mode more precariously at the boundary between land and sea. Admonishing his brother Perses against the risks of commercial seafaring, Hesiod warns:

If now the desire to go to sea (disagreeable as it is) has hold of you: when the Pleiades, running before Orion’s grim strength, are plunging into the misty sea, then the blasts of every kind of wind rage; at this time do not keep ships on the wine-faced sea, but work the earth assiduously, as I tell you. Pull the ship on to land and pack it with stones all round to withstand the fury of wet-blowing winds, . . . Lay away all the tackle under lock in your house . . .; hang the well-crafted steering-oar up in the smoke; and wait till the time for sailing comes.”¹

Orienting his georgic directives back toward the sturdier setting of the earth — “pull the ship on to land . . . Lay away . . . the tackle under . . . your house” — Hesiod makes the distinction between the virtues of landed craftwork (“the well-crafted steering oar,” for instance) and the folly of chanced-based economies (“the fury of wet-blowing winds”) quite clear.

As I suggested in the introduction, this opposition between skill and chance may well sound familiar to readers of the Enlightenment British Republicanism — a political philosophy that was profoundly influenced by the Machiavellian poles of *virtù* and *fortuna*. As J. G. A. Pocock defines it, “civic humanism” tested the democratic hypothesis on precisely such terms: “If the individual as citizen should fail to master time through participation in political decision, he would find himself in the world of time

¹ Hesiod, *Works and Days*, trans. M. L. West (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), 56.

neither understood, legitimised nor controlled. The failure of the republic was the triumph of Fortune.”² A world ruled by chance is the first sign of corruption, and for many writers the rise of new political economies — and Prime Minister Robert Walpole’s moneyed politics especially — encapsulated precisely such a threat. These anxieties are perhaps most vividly expressed by early eighteenth-century writers who return to that contingent, wind-swept setting of the sea. While Hesiod’s criticism of the sea voyage is where, for Hans Blumenberg and others, “we first encounter the culture-critical connection characterized by liquidity: water and money,” that metaphor gains some of its greatest concentration in the eighteenth century.³ From Jonathan Swift’s “deluded bankrupt” who “plunges in the Southern waves, / Dipt over head and ears in debt” to Daniel Defoe’s “compleat tradesman,” who is compared to a ship’s pilot running directly upon rocks, the financial revolution seemed to promise shipwreck as its “legitimate” result.⁴

Against this background, georgic would seem to promise something like safe harbor — that “home” of landed labor to which Perses is asked to return. Indeed, this is where poets and critics of the mode have tended to dwell, insisting, for instance, on georgic’s “particular affinity to economic discourse . . . to Physiocrat ways of privileging agricultural production.”⁵ Swift might seem an especially likely candidate for such a

² J. G. A. Pocock, “Civic Humanism and Its Role in Anglo-American Thought,” in *Politics, Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1989), 86.

³ Hans Blumenberg, *Shipwreck with Spectator: Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1998), 9.

⁴ Swift, “The Bubble,” in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, 2nd ed, 3 vol., ed. Harold Williams (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 1:23–24; Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman, Vol. 1*, in *Religious and Didactic Writings of Daniel Defoe*, 10 vol., ed. W. R. Owens and P. N. Furbank (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), 1:106. This is to quote Blumenberg, who writes: “In this field of representation, shipwreck is something like the legitimate result of seafaring” (10). On the financial revolution in England, see P. G. M. Dickson, *The Financial Revolution in England: A Study in the Development of Public Credit, 1688–1756* (London: Macmillan, 1967).

⁵ Kurt Heinzelman, “Roman Georgic in a Georgian Age: A Theory of Romantic Genre,” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 33.2 (1991): 182.

landed poetics, as he complains in an oft-cited passage from *The Examiner*, that “Power, which according to the old Maxim, was used to follow *Land*, is now gone over to *Money*.”⁶ Both as a vehicle for reactionary nostalgia and as a mode of protest against colonial misrepresentations of Ireland’s landscape and natural resources, georgic offers a privileged site for contesting poetic and economic representation and for writing against riskier new economies. So the story has importantly and persuasively gone. But this doesn’t quite account for Swift’s more pronounced, if often unacknowledged, attention to the poetics of the sea. In what follows, I will suggest something like the opposite effect in Swift’s georgics of the South Sea: first, by showing Swift’s resistance to modes of craft as virtue and then by looking to his ephemeral broadside poetry on the South Sea Bubble which, I will suggest, actively takes up and retheorizes rather than turns away from the period’s dreaded modes of fortune and contingency.

Swift’s resistance to form marks a rather sharp turn within this dissertation’s central narrative of craftsmanship. Whereas for Dryden and Pope form holds a salutary role as a strategy for evading censorship, Swift is implacably skeptical about the union of form and craft as technique. As Steele boasts in the preface to “The Description of Morning,” Swift “never forms Fields, or Nymphs, or Groves, where they are not, but makes the Incidents just as they really appear.”⁷ Similarly, Johnson’s *Dictionary* attributes the definition for “form, *n.*” as “external appearance without essential qualities; empty show” to Swift. This is perhaps most clearly evinced by his poetry, which

⁶ Jonathan Swift, *Examiner*, no. 13, 2 November 1710, in *The Examiner and Other Pieces Written in 1710–11*, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), 5.

⁷ Richard Steele, *The Tatler*, no. 9, 28 April 1709, ed. Donald F. Bond (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), 80.

expresses a repeated disappointment with the illusion of form.⁸ What's the use of poetry, Swift tirelessly inquires, when the muse is no more than a "mild form dependent on the brain / scattering loose features over the optic vein?"⁹ Or, as he asks in the more georgic context of *The Dean's Reasons for not Building at Drapier's Hill*, "How could I form so wild a vision / To seek, in deserts, Fields Elysian?"¹⁰ Playing out in reverse one of the most damaging aspects of British colonial rhetoric — that is, the misrepresentation of Irish land for the benefit of an Anglocentric trading system — these lines condemn the capacity of formal representation to have real effects. We saw earlier how neoclassical poets used notions of fiction as *fingere*, "to shape or to form," in order to cultivate reticent modes of protest; for Swift, however, fiction is better understood in opposition to facts and to reality, as a tool that almost always finds its way into the hands of those in power.¹¹

Readers familiar with Swift and landscape aesthetics will recognize this as one of the central lessons of Carole Fabricant's *Swift's Landscape*, which argues that Swift's "deepening involvement in Irish affairs and his growing insistence upon dealing with empirical realities . . . produced an increasingly cynical stance toward all forms of literary

⁸ For an account of Swift's critique of the imagination, see J. J. Hogan, "Bicentenary of Jonathan Swift 1667–1745," in *Swift: Modern Judgments*, ed. A. Norman Jeffares (Bristol: Macmillan, 1968), 48–50.

⁹ Jonathan Swift, *Ode Occasioned by Sir William Temple's Late Illness and Recovery*, in *Swift: Selections from His Work*, 2 vol., ed. Henry Craik (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892), 1:lines 21–22.

¹⁰ Swift, "The Dean's Reason's for not Building at Drapier's Hill," in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, 3:lines 16–17. As lines from his "Drapier's Hill" suggest, Swift is here riffing on the tradition of John Denham's *Cooper's Hill*, that canonical poem of neoclassical loco-description: "In Spight of Envy flourish still, / And Drapier's vye with Cooper's Hill" (John Denham, "Cooper's Hill," in *The Poetical Works of Sir John Denham*, ed. Theodore Howard Banks [New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1928], lines 19–20). On the importance of this poem for the Augustan tradition of cosmic world-building, see Earl Wasserman, *The Subtler Language: Critical Readings in Neoclassic and Romantic Poems* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1968). Swift registers his resistance to this literary tradition in which perception is privileged over economic reality, in which a well-wrought poem or a strategically written political statement has a greater effect than the natural resources themselves.

¹¹ On the "History of the Modern Fact," see Mary Poovey, *The History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998).

and political romanticization.”¹² Instead of continuing to track Swift’s “cynical stance,” however, I’d like to shift focus to the effects of what I call Swift’s “anti-formalism” on the period’s changing notions of craft aesthetics. While Swift’s intractable suspicion would seem to exclude him from any such genealogies of craft, I will suggest that it is precisely that which provokes the turn at midcentury toward more self-conscious accounts of practical labor. Reconciling the now polarized methods of surface and suspicion, Swift responds to political uses of craft as corruption — as craftiness, so to speak — by developing something like an anti-representational approach to poetry. His activist poetics offer a positive solution to the problem of georgic representation by foregrounding the mechanical parts of his own verse — that is, by developing a poetry of matter rather than of form. I’ll end by considering what these changing notions of craftsmanship mean for that unlikely georgic setting of the sea. As we shall soon discover, Swift’s turn from form to matter brings the seemingly ungeorgic realms of contingency and finance to bear on his poetry. Taking up and recasting Hesiodic traditions of seafaring, Swift refigures an ethics of action and protest that refuses to adhere to the deliberate modes of conduct often demanded by georgic labor. In the search for a poetry that “engages [one] in the highest acts of importance,” Swift may well have found success in turning away from the established values of the land to that riskier and unpredictable work of the sea.

¹² Carole Fabricant, *Swift’s Landscape* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1982), 9.

By midcentury, the close union of form and craft had shifted away from the rhetorical sleights of hand discussed in my first two chapters toward a self-conscious aesthetics of practical labor. Building on Ronald Paulson's classic argument in *The Art of Breaking and Remaking* that critics should focus less on the experience of art (as in the oft-studied sublime) than on the act of making and producing it, recent studies of Hogarth's "practical aesthetics" help to illustrate this shift.¹³ On these accounts, form, in the sense of "shape," plays a key role in revising empirical theories of representation.¹⁴ As Abigail Zitin argues in her work on Hogarth's "aesthetics of technique," attention to "form as a technical achievement of the artist . . . registers an incipient resistance to illusion, to being consumed by the representational content of the image."¹⁵ For Zitin, Hogarth's emphasis on "the formal abstraction of pictorial elements," as demonstrated by his empty-shell thought experiment, helps to move us "away from language, toward shape."¹⁶ Tracing the implications of Hogarth's diagrammatic aesthetics within early social theory, Ruth Mack similarly takes Hogarth's version of form as an alternative mode of experience: for the visual artisan, she claims, "shape could serve as a special sort of representation of the everyday."¹⁷ As the most basic structure of an object, form

¹³ This term is from the title of Ruth Mack's essay, cited below. As Mack notes on her page 24, the phrase is from Ronald Paulson's introduction to *The Analysis of Beauty*, also cited later on in this chapter. See Paulson, *Breaking and Remaking: Aesthetic Practice in England, 1700–1820* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1989), 4.

¹⁴ The renewed disciplinary interest in form seems to be moving this way as well. See, for instance, Sandra Macpherson, "A Little Formalism," *ELH* 82.2 (2015): 385–405 for a theoretically situated account of form as shape.

¹⁵ Abigail Zitin, "Thinking Like an Artist: Hogarth, Diderot, and the Aesthetics of Technique," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 46.4 (2013): 555–56.

¹⁶ Zitin, 567.

¹⁷ Ruth Mack, "Hogarth's Practical Aesthetics," in *Mind, Body, Motion, Matter: Eighteenth-Century British and French Literary Perspectives*, ed. Mary Helen McMurrin and Alison Conway (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2016), 33.

changes how one views the world, inviting readers and viewers to “think like an artist,” to borrow Zitin’s phrase, to see the lines of an image rather than its “pictorial illusion.”¹⁸

Swift holds a rather odd place within this history of form and craft labor. On the one hand, his commitment to a plain-style political activism provides a remarkable antithesis to the tradition of reticent georgic protest I’ve traced thus far; on the other, his view of form as a synonym of (rather than an antidote to) illusion appears similarly antithetical to midcentury practice-driven aesthetics. Rather than “register[ing] an incipient resistance to illusion,” Swift argues, form and craftsmanship take part in the cultivation of illusion as such. But Swift also contributes to this shift from reticent to explicit formalism by registering his skepticism against earlier notions of craftsmanship. We shall soon see how Swift develops his own aesthetics of technique: a material poetics that offers an influential rebuttal to empirical theories of representation.

How do early versions of craftsmanship end up in the hands of those in power? How, that is, does craft become craftiness, a mode of deceit rather than protest? One answer lies in the history of British Republicanism and the key Machiavellian poles of *virtù* and *fortuna* — or, craft and contingency — with which my project began. Pocock intriguingly turns to the language of Aristotelian teleology to explain the Florentine background of this tradition. Arguing that in the Florentine political theory, “the relation of *virtus* to *fortuna* became as the relation of form to matter,” Pocock writes: “Civic action (*virtus*) — the quality of being a man (*vir*) — seized upon the unshaped circumstance thrown up by fortune and shaped it, shaped fortune herself, into the

¹⁸ Zitin, 565.

completed form of what human life should be.”¹⁹ No doubt, the masculinist view of good citizenship would find a voice in the British Enlightenment, and the language of craft, the shaping of matter into form, would be key to its legacy there. From that vexed ideal of statecraft to demands for the “dexterous management” of the state, the skilled manipulation of “unshaped circumstance” was valued in this tradition as an inherent, if often unattainable political good.

We’ll see further in the dissertation’s coda how this political tradition played a decisive role in the development of the ethics of the novel over the course of the period. In his domestic novel *Amelia*, for instance, Henry Fielding proposes to subsume matters of contingency under a more deliberate logic of craftsmanship in what he calls the “Art of Life.” “Life,” he writes, “may as properly be called an art as any other; and the great incidents in it are no more to be considered as mere accidents, than the several members of a fine statue, or a noble poem.”²⁰ A staunch critic of England’s Prime Minister Robert Walpole, Fielding takes up the Machiavellian poles of *virtù* and *fortuna* to argue against the use of fortune as an alibi for immoral behavior, whether in the sphere of politics or in the context of one’s imperfect domestic life. This version of the civic humanist narrative, in which novelists privilege skill over chance, gets echoed more widely through the tradition of European bildungsroman. As one character asserts early on to Goethe’s Wilhelm Meister, “everyone holds his fortune in his hand, like a sculptor the raw material he will fashion into a figure [die er zu einer Gestalt umbilden will].”²¹ The central work

¹⁹ Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1975), 40–41.

²⁰ Henry Fielding, *Amelia*, ed. David Blewett (New York: Penguin, 1987), 14.

²¹ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*, in *Goethe: The Collected Works*, vol. 9, ed. and trans. Eric A. Blackall (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1995), 39.

of self-cultivation, or *Bildung*, is here taken as its own kind of “artistic activity,” the shaping of the raw material of fortune, which “must be learned and actively cultivated [gelernt und sorgfältig ausgeübt sein].”²² I will return to these examples in the conclusion to my project, but for now it’s enough to note that for both the individual and the political state, maturity was best accomplished through this version of craftsmanship, through mastering the unruly fortune that had become synonymous with corruption.

Needless to say, Swift had his doubts about the centrality of “art,” in its early sense as craft, to notions of the good political life. For Swift, this political tradition could be read rather differently as “the wily Shafts of State, those Juggler’s Tricks / Which we call deep Design and Politicks.”²³ He expresses some of his doubts in an early *Examiner* paper on the “Art of *Political Lying*.” Speculating about the murky history of “who first reduced *Lying* into an Art, and adapted it to *Politicks*,” Swift writes that “the Moderns have made great Additions, applying this Art to the gaining of Power, and preserving it, as well as revenging themselves after they have lost it.”²⁴ Swift’s definition of “art” as a deceptive strategy for preserving power hinges on his contrarian version of form with respect to politics.²⁵ Proposing to refine the “Genealogy [of the] *Political Lye*,” he claims that it “is sometimes born out of a discarded Statesman’s Head, and thence delivered to be nursed and dandled by the Rabble. Sometimes it is produced a Monster, and licked

²² Goethe, 39.

²³ Swift, “Ode to Sir William Temple,” in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, 1:lines 92–93.

²⁴ Swift, *Examiner*, no. 14, 9 November 1710, in *The Examiner and Other Pieces Written in 1710–11*, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), 9.

²⁵ As Paddy Bullard has recently suggested, we get a sense of craft as political corruption, or as “an apprenticeship in low cunning,” in *Gulliver’s Travels* (“*Gulliver*, Medium, Technique,” *ELH* 83 [2016]: 534). On Bullard’s account, “Swift, a clergyman and writer who does not seem otherwise to have had any special interest in artisanship, return[s] . . . insistently to descriptions of material processes in *Gulliver’s Travels*” (519). Part of my aim in this chapter is to demonstrate that Swift contributes to changes in understanding those material processes in his innovations to verse form.

into Shape; at other Times it comes into the World completely formed, and is spoiled in the licking.”²⁶ Trading cultivation for the erratic work of “licking” — and here recalling the feminized labor of the mother bear who licks her newborn cubs into shape in Pliny’s *Natural History* — Swift registers his skepticism against contemporary political norms.²⁷ Rather than an antidote to illusion, “Shape,” and the shaping of form into matter, is here instrumental in mobilizing political deception.

Here Swift expresses a longstanding anxiety that can be heard in Dryden’s angrier lines on the fictitious Popish Plot of 1678–81: “By Proving theirs no plot they prove ’tis worst, / Unmask’d Rebellion, and audacious Force, / Which, though not Actual, yet all Eyes may see / ’Tis working, in th’immediate Pow’r to be.”²⁸ The art of the political lie is likewise most dangerous insofar as it allows unsubstantiated representations to have material effects: “It can conquer Kingdoms without Fighting, and sometimes with the Loss of a battle.”²⁹ Where Addison and Defoe had their overdetermined allegories of Lady Credit, Swift had the Goddess of Political Lying whose special power depends upon the dangerous work of representation: “This Goddess flies with a huge *Looking-glass* in her Hands to dazzle the crowd, and make them see, according as she turns it, their Ruin in their Interest, and their Interest in their ruin.”³⁰ For Swift, the “most skillful Head in

²⁶ Swift, *Examiner*, no. 14, 9.

²⁷ See Pliny, *Natural History*, *Volume III: Books 8–11*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1940), 91.

²⁸ John Dryden, *The Medall. A Satyre against Sedition*, in *The Works of John Dryden*, 20 vol., ed. H. T. Swedenberg Jr. and Vinton A. Dearing (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972), 2:lines 220–23.

²⁹ Swift, *Examiner*, no. 14, 10.

³⁰ Swift, *Examiner*, no. 14, 10. On Addison’s “Lady Credit,” see Sophie Gee, *Making Waste: Leftovers and the Eighteenth-Century Imagination* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2010), 96–97 and Colin Nicholson, *Writing and the Rise of Finance: Capital Satires of the Early Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), 46–48; on Defoe’s, see Mary Poovey, *Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2008), 93–123 and Paula Backscheider, “Defoe’s Lady Credit,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 44.2 (1981): 89–100.

England [the late Earl of Wharton]” trades in precisely this kind of effect: “The Superiority of his Genius consists in nothing else but an inexhaustible Fund of *Political Lyes*, which he plentifully distributes every Minute he speaks, and by an unparalleled Generosity forgets, and consequently contradicts the next half Hour.”³¹ The paper does offer one possible solution to such political capriciousness, that is, “to suppose that you have heard some inarticulate Sounds, without any Meaning at all.”³² The only remedy, Swift maintains, is to divest language of its representational qualities — to resist understanding with noise.

In the context of Swift’s own writing, proposing to trade representation for noise is not as strange as one might first expect, especially when it comes to his poetry. It’s become something of a commonplace in Swift criticism to claim that his easy conversational tetrameter is unlikely to reward interpretation. Contemporary poet Derek Mahon describes Swift’s “unmediated transparency and colloquial vigour,” for instance, as “seemingly yielding little to close analysis,” a softer version of Samuel Johnson’s claim that “in the poetical works of Dr. Swift there is not much upon which the critick can exercise his powers.”³³ With its departure from the high neoclassical formalism of his contemporaries, Swift’s verse repels readers with its insistent simplicity.³⁴ While critics have tended to explain the difficulty of reading Swift by pointing to his doggerel verse —

³¹ Swift, *Examiner*, no. 14, 11.

³² Swift, *Examiner*, no. 14, 11.

³³ Derek Mahon, introduction to *Jonathan Swift: Poems*, in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Claude Rawson (New York: Norton, 2010), 796. Samuel Johnson, *The Life of Swift*, in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, 739. Leavis puts the same problem in slightly different terms, writing that Swift’s works are “of such a kind that it is peculiarly difficult to discuss them without shifting the focus of discussion to the kind of man that Swift was” (F. R. Leavis, “The Irony of Swift,” in *Discussions of Jonathan Swift*, ed. John Traugott [Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1962], 35).

³⁴ See A. B. England, *Energy and Order in the Poetry of Swift* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell Univ. Press, 1980) for a discussion of Swift’s resistance to Augustan poetics.

the “not much” of Johnson’s criticism — I’d like to suggest instead that Swift’s poetry is more deliberately anti-representational, that it resists form and representation as an assault on the aesthetic norms and values of contemporary politics.

Read against a background of republican civic virtue, the following lines from the “Progress of Beauty” could be read as one version of such a response: “Matter, as wise Logicians say, / Cannot without a Form subsist; / And Form, say I as well as they, / Must fail, if Matter brings no Grist.”³⁵ At first, the lines appear to confirm Swift’s reputation as a prosaic poet — the conversational “say I as well as they” would indeed seem to discourage close attention to the poetry itself. But the rhythm of the lines registers a further protest against form. The initial trochee “Matter” begins with a break in conventional meter, followed by the “Cannot” of the next line, whereas Swift’s response is written in smoother conversational iambs, a joke on the style of formal logicians. Through the “colloquial vigor” of his poetry Swift disrupts form with matter, inverting the political and rhetorical conventions of the period. He posits the unshapen matter of his poetry as rejoinder to the strategic, and often undetected, applications of careful design to contemporary statecraft.

Such a turn toward the matter of poetry might seem unexpected in a writer known for his vexed perspective on material philosophy.³⁶ Premised as a flight from Hobbesian materialism, *A Tale of a Tub* offers a sustained critique of that intellectual tradition.³⁷ In his ironic instruction that people must acquire “*a superior position of place*” in order to

³⁵ Swift, “The Progress of Beauty,” in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, lines 65–68.

³⁶ See, for instance, Laura Baudot, “What Not to Avoid in Swift’s ‘Lady’s Dressing Room,’” *Studies in English Literature: 1500–1900* 49.3 (2009): 637–66 for a reading of Swift’s poetry in terms of materialist theories of matter and void.

³⁷ The Preface begins with the remark “that seamen have a custom when they meet a *whale* [i.e., *The Leviathan*], to fling him out an empty *tub* by way of amusement, to divert him from laying violent hands upon the ship” (Swift, *A Tale of a Tub*, ed. Angus Ross [New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008], 18).

obtain public attention, for instance, the narrator claims “that air being a heavy body, and therefore (according to the system of Epicurus) continually descending, must needs be more so when loaden and pressed down by words, which are also bodies of much weight and gravity.”³⁸ Despite the satiric bent of these lines, there’s something to be said for taking seriously the concept of weighty words when it comes to Swift’s own poetic method.³⁹ Compare this to Swift’s notorious burlesque of Dryden’s *Georgics* at the end of “A Description of a City Shower”: “Sweepings from Butchers Stalls, Dung, Guts, and Blood, / Drown’d Puppies, stinking Sprats, all drench’d in mud, / Dead Cats, and Turnip-Tops come tumbling down the Flood” (61–63).⁴⁰ Swift’s two-part parody here literalizes cliché (it’s “raining cats and dogs”) and materializes the triplets and alexandrines common to Dryden’s verse. Later identified with bathos, or “the art of sinking in poetry,” the triplet here sinks along with the “dead cats, and turnip tops” of his final alexandrine, enacting the “weight and gravity of words” in response to Dryden’s craft formalism.

By defamiliarizing conventional figures of poetry, Swift actively resists the modes of formal craftsmanship we saw in the previous two chapters. Where Dryden and Pope turn to artisanal methods as a strategy for making seditious claims without having explicitly to state them, Swift allies this evasive logic of craft labor with the “art of political lying.” In his own verse, this means exchanging such reticent poetics for a more explicit and self-conscious depiction of the vehicles that comprise his poetry. We might say that instead of “form[ing] fields where they are not,” Swift’s poetry materializes

³⁸ Swift, *A Tale of a Tub*, 27.

³⁹ See Richard Kroll, *The Material Word: Literate Culture in the Restoration and Early Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1991) for a classic account the Epicurean influence on Restoration and eighteenth-century theories of language.

⁴⁰ Swift, “Description of a City Shower,” in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, lines 61–63. The line from Dryden’s *Georgics* is: “And cakes of rustling ice come rolling down in the flood” (Dryden, *Georgics*, in *The Works of John Dryden*, 5:1.418).

rhetorical figures where they have often gone unnoticed. He takes neoclassical formalism to its most obvious and literal extreme. “The Progress of Beauty,” for instance, begins by announcing a common rhetorical figure: “Twixt earthly Females and the Moon, / All Parallels exactly run; / If Celia should appear too soon, / Alas, the Nymph would be undone.”⁴¹ Here Swift revises the structure of metaphor, so that the vehicle is not made to lie under or be in the service of the tenor. As two parallel lines, Celia and the moon both live on the surface of Swift’s analogy. As ever, representation does not stand as the end goal of Swift’s poetry. The arrested metaphor offers a useful case study in Swift’s materialist, and anti-representational poetics: surface is incited by suspicion, as Swift works to de-idealize poetry through such flattened poetic devices.⁴²

But denouncing earlier modes of craft reticence does not mean denouncing craft labor altogether. Swift in fact consistently turns to the processes of labor throughout his verse. He for instance dilates upon Celia’s cosmetic “Workmanship” in “The Progress of Beauty,” a labor of “four important hours” with “pencil, paint, and brush,” and “The Lady’s Dressing Room” begins with a similar comment on Celia’s labor time — “Five hours and who can do it less in.”⁴³ In contrast to Pope’s Belinda, who never openly labors to be beautiful but rather “Sees by Degrees a purer Blush arise,” Swift’s anti-heroines are made to show their work.⁴⁴ Swift does this, too. In contrast to the high neoclassicism of his contemporaries, Swift’s poetry insists on reminding readers of its component parts.

⁴¹ Swift, “The Progress of Beauty,” in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, lines 1–4.

⁴² Johnson remarked of Swift: “That he has in his works no metaphor, as has been said, is not true; but his few metaphors seem to be received rather by necessity than choice” (*The Life of Swift*, in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, 736).

⁴³ Swift, “The Progress of Beauty,” in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, lines 33–44; “The Lady’s Dressing Room,” in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, line 1.

⁴⁴ Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1967), I.143.

He describes the tortured process of writing in an early Birthday poem to Stella: “If with more than usual Pain, / A Thought came slowly from my Brain, / It cost me Lord knows how much Time / To shape it into Sense and Rhyme.”⁴⁵ Instead of the finished formal “shape” of a poem, Swift lingers over the painstaking work that comes before; he brackets poetic traditions of sprezzatura by demonstrating the raw material of his verse. I’d argue that this commitment to a more openly labored poetics is what gives Swift’s work its unassuming “colloquial vigor.” As Howard Erskine-Hill has noted, Swift’s “Knack at Rhyme,” a phrase taken from *Verses on the Death of Doctor Swift*, ties his “conspicuously unpretentious” verse to the “world of practical skills.”⁴⁶ Indeed, the comically forced rhyme of “dress in / less in” at the beginning of “The Lady’s Dressing Room” — and others like it, “Mars is / Arses” or “Methusalem / Use all ’em” — helps to announce its own poetic trade.⁴⁷ In this way, Swift establishes his doggerel verse with a defiantly self-conscious account of practical labor.

There’s a story to be told about the legacy of Swift’s anti-formalist poetics that stretches well into the twentieth century. I suspect it has remained untold because the

⁴⁵ Swift, “Stella’s Birth-Day. A great Bottle of Wine, long buried, being that Day dug up (1722–23)” in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, lines 7–10.

⁴⁶ Howard Erskine-Hill, “Swift’s Knack at Rhyme,” in *Sustaining Literature: Essays on Literature, History, and Culture*, ed. Greg Clingham (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell Univ. Press, 2007), 137. Swift coins the phrase in the voice of the bookseller and printer Bernard Lintot, who responds to a Country Squire asking for Swift’s works a year after his death, “The Dean was famous in his Time; / And had a Kind of Knack at Rhyme” (*Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift*, in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, lines 264–65). Mary Montagu invokes the phrase in her satire on Swift’s “Lady’s Dressing Room”: “Perhaps you have no better Luck in / The Knack of Rhyming than of -----” (“The Dean’s Provocation for Writing the Lady’s Dressing Room,” in *Eighteenth-Century Poetry: An Annotated anthology*, 3rd ed, ed. David Fairer and Christine Gerrard [Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015], lines 92–93). Erskine-Hill briefly expands on the connotations of the phrase at the beginning of his essay: “These tentative associations are worth touching on since they would also relate to a traditional mockery of rhyme as being like the rhythmically jingling bells on the harness of a carthorse, a comparison used derisively by Marvell of Dryden and often recalled in self-deprecating ways by Pope” (137–38).

⁴⁷ Swift, “Directions for Making a Birth-Day Song,” in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, lines 29–30; “Stella’s Birth-Day. A great Bottle of Wine, long buried,” in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, lines 37–38.

forced rhymes, sinking triplets, clunky rhythms, and doggerel style have earned his work the somewhat misleading title of “anti-poetry.” Defined by Wallace Stevens as “that truth, that reality to which all of us are ever fleeing,” anti-poetry has come to mean what one might expect it would in Swift studies: a resistance to abstraction in favor of the real and the everyday as evinced by his attention to filth or his insistent doggerel verse.⁴⁸ The focus on the “real” in terms of an everyday poetics likely takes its cue from Stevens’s assertion that for William Carlos Williams, “the anti-poetic is a blood-passion and not a passion of the inkpot”; that Williams’s poetry results from a “conjunction of the unreal and the real, the sentimental and the anti-poetic, the constant interaction of two opposites.”⁴⁹ While Swift’s poetry has been productively read in precisely such terms, I’d like to suggest instead that the effect of showing the seams of his verse plays an important part in the development of anti-representational poetics — something closer to the noise recommended by *The Examiner* than the realistic representations of filth for which he continues to be known. Swift’s influence seems to me even more pronounced in the theory and poetry of Stevens than in relation to Williams’s anti-poetic affinities. When the later poet claims that “above everything else, poetry is words; and that words,

⁴⁸ Wallace Stevens, preface to William Carlos Williams, *The Collected Poems, 1921–1931*, in *Critical Essays on William Carlos Williams*, ed. Steven Gould Axelrod and Helen Deese (New York: G. K. Hall & Co., 1995), 70. For instance, E. San Juan Jr. describes Swift’s “unfailing anti-poetic” method thus: “Far from excluding matters of daily life, Swift includes the normal environment however brutish or filthy. His light verse seriously concerns itself with problems in a social context” (“The Anti-Poetry of Jonathan Swift,” in *Essential Articles for the Study of Jonathan Swift’s Poetry*, ed. David M. Vieth [Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1984], 27). See also Ricardo Quintana, *Swift: An Introduction* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1955), 92–93 and *The Mind and Art of Jonathan Swift*, (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1936), 49–74. For more on Swift’s affinity for filth or waste, see Norman O. Brown, “The Excremental Vision,” in *Discussions of Jonathan Swift*, ed. John Traugott (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1962) 92–104 and Gee, 91–111.

⁴⁹ Stevens, preface to Williams, 70.

above everything else, are, in poetry, sounds,” for instance, one hears an echo of Swift’s own adage on composition: that good style consists of “*proper words in proper places*.”⁵⁰

Indeed, both Swift and Stevens are responding to the same empiricist philosophers of representation.⁵¹ Tracing what he describes as the unfortunate turn to denotation in the philosophy of Locke and Hobbes, Stevens pushes back against the pressure of semantic meaning, against the demand that words must serve as vehicles for signification. We can begin to see the two poets’ similar reactions to this moment of intellectual history in Stevens’s poetic rendition of “Weather”: “... Weather by Franz Hals, / Brushed up by brushy winds in brushy clouds, / Wetted by blue, colder for white.”⁵² Materializing the immaterial “Weather” of Hals — not a title of any one work but rather an aspect of his portraiture — and adding volume and sensation to the colors of the image, Stevens expresses a Swiftian palpability in his verse. Where Locke had described the complex idea of beauty in terms of the experience rather than the making of it as “a certain composition of Colour and Figure, causing delight to the Beholder,” Stevens materializes such secondary qualities through the medium of poetic language.⁵³ Compare Stevens’s “brushy winds” to Swift’s discussion of Celia’s complexion in the “Progress of Beauty”:

A frowzy dirty colour’d red

⁵⁰ Stevens, “The Noble Rider and the Sound of Words,” in *The Necessary Angel: Essays on Reality and the Imagination* (New York: Random House, 1951), 32; quoted in Johnson, 739. Stevens’s words might also recall how the speaker of *A Tale of a Tub* argues in a translation of Epicurus, “‘Tis certain then, that *voice* that thus can wound, / Is all material, *body every sound*” (28fn).

⁵¹ On these debates in relation to perception, see Jonathan Kramnick, “Presence of Mind: An Ecology of Perception in Eighteenth-Century England,” in *Mind, Body, Motion, Matter: Eighteenth-Century British and French Literary Perspectives*, ed. Mary Helen McMurrin and Alison Conway (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2016), 47–71. This empirical background is also key to the arguments about Hogarth and anti-representationalism in Mack and Zitin.

⁵² Stevens, “Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction,” in *Wallace Stevens: The Collected Poems* (New York: Vintage, 1990), 385.

⁵³ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1975), 165.

Sits on her cloudy wrinkled Face
...
Three Colours, Black, and Red, and White
So graceful in their proper Place,
Remove them to a different Light,
They form a frightful hideous face.

For Instance, when the Lilly skips
Into the Precincts of the Rose,
And takes Possession of the Lips,
Leaving the Purple to the Nose.⁵⁴

Against empiricist representations, Swift materializes color so that the “frowzy dirty colour’d red” and skipping “Lilly” appear to have solidity and even agency. He trades signification for the surface textures of his poem, making representation haptic and sensory. Swift would often turn to the sister art in order to materialize such complex ideas, claiming in an early ode that “to form a regular *Thought of Fame*, / . . . is perhaps as hard t’imagine right / *As to paint Eccho to the Sight*.”⁵⁵ Conceiving of poetry as “just words” and “just sounds,” Swift flattens out such compound secondary qualities in favor of the rough textured matter of his verse.

At first, the lines from Stevens would seem to promise something like ekphrasis. Having announced “the Weather by Franz Hals,” the poet might then have gone on to describe an image. What we are given instead are the textures of a painting, the “brushy strokes and brushy clouds,” the palpable techniques of the medium rather than its representational content. I hear a similarly heightened sense of the poetic medium in Swift’s “A Description of the Morning”:

The Small-coal man was heard with Cadence deep;
Till drown’d in shriller Notes of Chimney-sweep.
Duns at his Lordship’s Gate began to meet;

⁵⁴ Swift, “The Progress of Beauty,” in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, lines 3–4, 17–24.

⁵⁵ Swift, “Ode to the Athenian Society,” in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, lines 158–60.

And Brick-dust Moll had scream'd through half a Street,⁵⁶

The metrical consistency of Swift's lines is matched by the deep cadences of the workers' movements — monotonous, regular, and methodical. Swift fuses his own prosody with the habitual rhythms of this morning cityscape. "Drowned in shriller notes," and "heard with cadence deep," the voices of "the Small-coal man" and "Brick-dust Moll" are materialized in the textures of Swift's verse. Swift describes his own "brushy strokes" a couple lines earlier: "The Youth with broomy Stumps began to trace / The Kennel-Edge where Wheels had worn the Place."⁵⁷ Not simply a formal imposition upon the content of the poem, rhythm is here inseparable from the sprinkling of sawdust and tracing with broomy stumps that the poem describes. Against Barrell's account of the English landscape, neither poem cedes to pictorial representation.⁵⁸ In Swift, as in Stevens, description acts as the materialization of the sound and matter of poetry — an unlikely instance of the medium specificity of verse.

Swift's poem provides its own surprising twist on ekphrasis. Materializing abstract movements and rhythms as primary qualities, the poem offers a good case study against representation. There's something quite painterly about the tableau itself. Figured as a single anticipatory moment of time, the poem conjoins a series of contemporaneous events through the parataxis of the speaker's repeated "nows" and "ands":

Now hardly here and there a Hackney-Coach
Appearing, show'd the ruddy Morn's Approach.
Now Betty from her Master's Bed had flown,
And softly stole to discompose her own.
The Slip-shod 'Prentice from his Master's Door

⁵⁶ Swift, "A Description of the Morning," in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, lines 11–14.

⁵⁷ Swift, "A Description of the Morning," in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, lines 9–10.

⁵⁸ John Barrell writes, "there is no word in English which denotes a tract of land . . . which is apprehended visually but not, necessarily pictorially" (*The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place, 1730–1840* [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1972], 1).

Had par'd the Dirt and sprinkled round the Floor
Now Moll had whirl'd her Mop with dext'rous Airs,
Prepared to scrub the Entry and the Stairs.⁵⁹

One can see why Hogarth would have found inspiration in this poem for his *Four Times a Day* series.⁶⁰ Much like in those visual satires, Swift's poem suspends several actions at the level of surface. The pluperfect "nows" and "hads" depict a single instant, undermining the linear reading that's demanded by conventional verse. Expressing only a fleeting moment of time, Swift's "Description" approaches ekphrasis less as a verbal representation of an image than as an experiment in painting's temporal constraints.

In this sense, Hogarth's debt to Swift is quite clear, in that both treat surface as the antidote to rather than the opposite of suspicion. The non-logical sequence of images and past-perfect constructions indeed show something like the practitioner's non-representational stance, a medium specificity of texture and rhythm that I've argued is key to Swift's anti-representational poetics. Along these lines, Swift's commitment to showing the seams of his poetry may well have found something of an afterlife in Hogarth.⁶¹ Where Hogarth would begin his *Analysis of Beauty* by asking the reader to imagine "any opaque object" with its "inward contents scoop'd out so nicely as to have nothing of it left but a thin shell" made up of "close connected circular threads, or lines,"

⁵⁹ Swift, "A Description of the Morning," in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, lines 1–8.

⁶⁰ As Ronald Paulson has suggested, "the flow of gin, urine, and blood in *Night* . . . may recall the purgation of the city at the end of Swift's "Description of a City Shower" (anticipated by the gutter with its dead cat in *Noon*)" (*Hogarth, Volume 2: Art High and Low, 1732–1750* [New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1992], 145). Paulson makes oblique reference to Swift's two description poems in tracing the influence of Gay's *Trivia* on Hogarth's *Four Times a Day* series (142). I'd suggest the influence is even greater, not least because of the explicit debt to Swift that Gay notes at the beginning of his own work.

⁶¹ Swift expresses his affinity for the visual artist in his "Character, Panegyric, and Description of the Legion Club": "How I want thee, humorous *Hogart*? / Thou I hear, a pleasant Rogue art; / Were but you and I acquainted, / Every Monster should be painted; / You should try your graving Tools; / On this odious Group of Fools; / Draw the Beasts as I describe 'em, / Form their Features, while I gibe them" ("A Character, Panegyric, and Description of the Legion Club," in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, 3:lines 219–26).

Swift had earlier broken down poetry into its basic parts by foregrounding rhymes, triplets, and imperfect metaphors.⁶² Both writers resist the illusory aspects of formal representation by turning to the raw material — whether that be lines or rhymes — of their work.

Swift would make some of his most effective contributions to literature and to the Irish cause from this revised posture of craft labor.⁶³ Most famously, Swift's Drapier casts himself as a simple tradesman, unfamiliar with the new terms of the market. Musing on how he "a poor ignorant Shop-keeper, utterly unskilled in Law" could answer to the report on the patent for Wood's copper half-pence, Swift's Drapier turns to "plain reason, unassisted by art, cunning, or eloquence" and later proposes that we "take the whole Matter nakedly, as it lies before us, without the Refinements of some People, with which we have nothing to do."⁶⁴ His argument hinges on undermining his own expertise, as he writes that "there was no great skill required to detect the many mistakes" in Newton's report of his assay of the coins. In response to the jargon and uneven distribution of power that had come to define both political and aesthetic craftsmanship, Swift signposts a different sort of artisanal style. Apologizing for his "long undigested Paper," he writes: "I find my self to have gone into several Repetitions, which were the Effects of haste, while new Thoughts fell in to add something to what I had said before."⁶⁵ Here we might

⁶² William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, ed. Ronald Paulson (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1997), 21.

⁶³ Of course Swift's relation to Ireland was notoriously vexed. On this, see Claude Rawson, *Swift's Angers* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2014).

⁶⁴ Swift, "Some Observations Upon a Paper, called, The Report of the Committee of the Most Honourable the Privy Council in England, relating to Wood's Half-pence [Third Drapier's Letter]," in *The Drapier's Letters and Other Works 1724–1725*, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), 29. Swift, "A Letter to the Whole People of Ireland [Fourth Drapier's Letter]," in *The Drapier's Letters and Other Works 1724–1725*, 57.

⁶⁵ Swift, "Some Observations Upon a Paper, called, The Report of the Committee of the Most Honourable the Privy Council in England, relating to Wood's Half-pence [Third Drapier's Letter]," 47

recall the “needless repetitions” that Christopher Merrett made sure to remove in his translation of Neri’s *Art of Glass* (see chapter one, herein). Swift does not make repetition beautiful, as Dryden does in his georgic translation; he rather signals his clumsy style as just that. He deliberately and necessarily evacuates his own writing of skill, casting these world-changing pamphlets as mere works in progress.

We can then see how the period’s strategies for protest changed. Swift’s resistance to jargon finds him taking up these revised notions of craft as open practical technique in order to reach a wider audience through plain speech.⁶⁶ Johnson’s influential claim that “when Swift is considered as an author, it is just to estimate his powers by their effects” here begins to make some sense with respect to the craft aesthetic.⁶⁷ Swift’s anti-formalist mode of protest shifts the focus away from the poems themselves toward the outside world. Such an effect becomes clear in Swift’s seditious Fourth Drapier’s Letter, in which he exhorts, “The remedy is wholly in your hands, and therefore I have digressed a little in order to refresh and continue that spirit so seasonably raised amongst you.”⁶⁸

Swift’s plain speech activism diminishes his own literary craftsmanship — “I have

⁶⁶ On the tradition of plain speech protest with respect to early modern handicraftsman, see Christopher Hill, *The Collected Essays*, 3 vol. (Amhurst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1985), 1:75–92.

⁶⁷ Johnson, *The Life of Swift*, in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, 736. This sentiment has been echoed throughout the later criticism. As Derek Mahon notes, his poems, “technically simple but rhetorically complex, owe much of their effect to the known character of the author and his contemporary celebrity” (Introduction to *Jonathan Swift: Poems*, in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, 796), and Hogan claims similarly that Swift’s works are often “aimed at an immediate practical effect” (“Bicentenary of Jonathan Swift 1667–1745,” in *Swift: Modern Judgments*, 48). In a related vein, Leavis argues against the view of Swift as an intellectual poet: “He is distinguished by the intensity of his feelings, not by insight into them, and he certainly does not impress us as a mind in possession of its experience” (“The Irony of Swift,” in *Discussions of Jonathan Swift*, 43). In a longer version of this chapter, I might consider how Swift’s revised aesthetics of protest revises what Ronald Paulson describes as “art of riot.” Rather than replacing effect with affect, as Paulson suggests, Swift incites both through his activist and anti-formalist poetics. It’s perhaps this concerted attention to literature’s effects that makes Swift “a man too much for his own time,” in Edward Said’s famous account, “a problem for the future” (*The World, the Text, and the Critic*, [Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1983], 69). Helen Deutsch further theorizes the implications of this phrase for Swift’s “untimeliness” in her current project on Said and Swift.

⁶⁸ Swift, “A Letter to the Whole People of Ireland [Fourth Drapier’s Letter],” in *The Drapier’s Letters and Other Works 1724–1725*, 63.

digressed a little” — in favor of the more contingent effects of his writing. He cedes control to the “spirit” of the Irish people.

Pope made quite clear on which side of the craft–contingency divide good poetry should fall: “True Ease in Writing comes from Art, not Chance, / As those move easiest who have learn’d to dance.”⁶⁹ Perhaps clearer still is Swift’s response to such a precept. He writes in his 1735 birthday poem to Stella, “As, when a beauteous Nymph decays, / We say, she’s past her Dancing-Days; / So, Poets lose their Feet by Time, / And can no longer dance in Rhyme.”⁷⁰ We’ve seen how Swift’s poetry refuses to perform such a “dance in rhyme” by laying bare the painstaking effort behind even the roughest verse.⁷¹ (Even in the lines above Swift’s poetic “feet” remain a loud and insistent presence in regular iambs.) But he also expresses this deliberate artlessness by looking to the very elements of “Chance” that Pope decries. “Each atom by some other struck,” Swift writes in his poem To Alexander Pope after having written the *Dunciad*, “All Turns and Motion tries; / Till in a Lump together stuck, / Behold a poem rise!”⁷² Depicting *concordia discors* in terms of Lucretian motion, the lines offer a useful case study in the poetics of civic virtue. Just as a good citizen is supposed to shape contingent temporality, or *fortuna*, into the deliberate work of *virtù*, so the very neoclassicism that Swift continues to resist takes as its central premise a similar cultivation of order from disorder.

⁶⁹ Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, lines 362–63.

⁷⁰ Swift, “Stella’s Birth-Day, 1725,” in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, lines 1–4.

⁷¹ Once we get to the later work of Pope, this contrast begins to look somewhat artificial. As Helen Deutsch has argued of Pope’s *Epistle 2.2.*, for instance, Pope inscribes connotations of suffering in the creation of art in his translation of Horace; see *Resemblance and Disgrace: Alexander Pope and the Deformation of Culture*, [Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1996], 169–218. Still, there’s something oblique about Pope’s approach to the pain of poetic labor, enacted through his elegant translation, which Swift’s poetry refuses to enact.

⁷² Swift to Alexander Pope, 15 January 1730–31, in *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D. D.*, 4 vol., ed. David Woolley (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999), 3:lines 13–16.

Against this background, Swift's material poetics might well be thought of in terms of the fortune or disorder that precedes the final product of a well-crafted poem. As early as 1692 he proclaims that what philosophers "imagine to be *wondrous Wit*" is nothing "but a *Crowd of Atoms* jostling in a heap."⁷³ There is certainly something nascent about Swift's work, something that makes his poems seem more like "provisional drafts . . . than finished compositions," as Mahon has suggested.⁷⁴ Swift comes close to saying as much in his poems to Stella, which he describes as no more than a "Pile of scatter'd Rhymes."⁷⁵ After complaining of the "more than usual Pain" it took to even conceive of an idea, much less to "Shape it into Sense and Rhyme," he ends his 1723 "Stella's Birthday" with only the promise of completion: "The Muse will at your call appear, / With Stella's Praise to Crown the Year."⁷⁶ Swift insists on suspending the process of his poetry, leaving the reader with a scattered pile of rhymes, or the contingent movement of atoms, and withholding form from the unshapen and unpredictable matter that precedes it.⁷⁷ This plaintive strain was indeed common throughout Swift's career. Writing in a letter to Thomas Swift, "It makes me mad to hear you talk of making a Copy of verses next morning, which . . . I could not do under 2 or 3 days," he complains, "nor does it enter my head to make any thing of a sudden but What I find to be exceeding silly stuff except by great chance, I esteem the time of studying Poetry to be 2 hours in a morning,

⁷³ Swift, "Ode to the Athenian Society," in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, lines 125–27.

⁷⁴ Mahon, introduction to *Jonathan Swift: Poems*, in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, 802.

⁷⁵ Swift, "To Stella, who collected and transcribed his Poems," in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, line 5.

⁷⁶ Swift, "Stella's Birth-Day, 1723," in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, lines 79–80.

⁷⁷ Using the language of contemporary material philosophy, one might say that Swift's later poems to Stella are devoid of any such essential qualities and are instead a dynamic collection of parts — "atoms arranged poem-wise," to borrow Trenton Merricks's phrase — swerving, decaying, and developing, but never congealing as a fixed object. Or, in the tradition of sensibility, we might think of Swift's poetry as "process" rather than "product," which is how Northrop Frye defines that post-Augustan age.

and that onely when the humor sits.”⁷⁸ With his strained passives and his claim to depend on “chance” or humor, Swift brings the forces of contingency to bear upon the painstaking process of art.

I suggested in the introduction that this paradoxical blend of muted agency and exhausting labor is specific to the georgic mode. This effect is perhaps most vividly expressed in the unlikely georgic setting of the sea. Both in his poetry and in his economic policy, Swift could not be said to heed Hesiod’s warning. Despite his memorable statements on landed power, Swift was also actively engaged in the new political economy. His work on Irish Manufacture relied on arguments about the balance of trade — the Irish cause for Swift often meant simply producing more exports than imports — and critics have even recently shown that he himself was active in the stock market.⁷⁹ As he laments in “A Short View of the State of Ireland” (1727): “The Conveniency of Ports and Havens, which Nature hath bestowed so liberally on this Kingdom, is of no more Use to us, than a beautiful Prospect to a Man shut up in a Dungeon.”⁸⁰ Not only a complaint about the ideology of the “prospect” view, the lines make a claim for the importance of Irish commerce: they extend craft out onto the open seas.

Although poets and critics have tended to dwell on Hesiod’s “home” of landed labor, the riskier winds of commercial seafaring — in which a person’s fate is at the

⁷⁸ Jonathan Swift to Thomas Swift, 3 May 1692, in *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, 1:8. For more on Swift’s sense of muted agency with regard to his own poetic trade, see the last stanza of his “Ode to William Temple,” in which he describes poetry in terms of the material trades, and describes himself as being bound by the muse.

⁷⁹ On Swift’s arguments surrounding commerce, see Louis Landa, “Swift’s Economic Views and Mercantilism,” in *Swift: Modern Judgments*, 75–95; on his financial speculation, see Nicholson, *Writing and the Rise of Finance: Capital Satires of the Early Eighteenth Century*.

⁸⁰ Swift, “A Short View of the State of Ireland,” in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*, 291.

whim of “Poseidon the earth-shaker or Zeus king of the immortals” — nonetheless loom over later iterations of the mode. As Dryden’s invocation of *Georgic* IV reminds us, Virgil’s poem is in fact sung while seafaring: “Now, did I not so near my Labours end, / Strike Sail, and hast’ning to the Harbour tend; / My Song to Flow’ry Gardens might extend.”⁸¹ Here, the promise of safe landing yields poetic silence, and georgic begins to look less like a nostalgic longing for landed power than a hazardous mode of new economies. This metaphor was central to much of Swift’s political verse. He writes for instance of Ireland as that “poor floating Isle tossed on ill Fortune’s waves,” an “unhappy ship” at sea.⁸² And his Latin verse poem “Carberiae Rupes” describes the Carbery Rocks of County Cork from the perspective of such turbulence: “a huge Fragment; destitute of props / Prone on the Waves the rocky Ruin drops [Ecce ingens fragmen scopuli quod vertice summo / Desuper impendet, nullo fundamine nixum / Descidit in fluctus].”⁸³ Having undermined one tradition of craftsmanship, Swift would shift his focus and his poetry to this world of fortune at sea.⁸⁴

This effect is further evinced by Swift’s precarious relation to Virgil’s *Georgics*. We know from his letters that Swift once intended to write a translation of Virgil — as he laments in 1692, “this Virgil sticks plaguily on my hands.”⁸⁵ By this time his mentor William Temple had already published excerpts from the *Georgics* and *the Pastorals* and

⁸¹ Dryden, *Georgics*, in *The Works of John Dryden*, 5:IV.175–77.

⁸² Swift, “Imitation of Horace, Book I, Ode XIV Paraphrased and Inscribed to Ireland,” in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, 3:lines 1, 9.

⁸³ Swift, “Carberiae Rupes in Comitatu Corgagensi apud Hybernicos,” trans. William Dunkin, in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, 1:lines 3–4.

⁸⁴ The importance of *Gulliver* to this tradition should go without saying. From its foundational parody of *Robinson Crusoe* to F. R. Leavis’s description of Swift as a “student of the *Mariner’s Magazine*,” Swift’s most canonical work makes shipwreck central to its narrative (Leavis, 35).

⁸⁵ Jonathan Swift to Thomas Swift, in *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, 1:111.

Dryden had begun his late-career turn to translation.⁸⁶ Although no evidence of the translation itself has been recovered, there is still some sense of Swift's alternative georgic spirit in the contemporary poetry.⁸⁷ Mentioned in that same letter, "The Ode to the Athenian Society" looks not to descriptions of landed labor but rather to Proteus, the "Shepherd of the Seas" with whom Virgil ends: "This Surly, *Slipp'ry God*, when He design'd / To furnish his Escapes / Ne'er borrow'd more *variety of Shapes*."⁸⁸ The lines anticipate Dryden's translation, published five years later, in which "The slipp'ry God will try to loose his hold: / And various Forms assume, to cheat thy sight; / And with vain Images of Beasts affright."⁸⁹ Both passages take up the tradition of Plato's *Ion*, which similarly invokes the image of Proteus, "twisting high and low [to] take every shape under the sun," to condemn poetic enthusiasm as a lack of skill.⁹⁰ As we've seen in Swift, however, careful design and enthusiasm are two sides of the same coin. Developing throughout his career a more contingent view of georgics and the sea, one based on chance and fortune rather than skill, Swift would begin to think through a way out of such pervasive arts of deception.

When it comes to the poetry of finance, Swift is more often thought to resist rather than to encourage the forces of chance. As Catherine Ingrassia has argued, "the goddesses of disorder, Fortuna and Credit," were conventionally associated with the professional "hack" writers whom Pope and Swift would relentlessly ridicule.⁹¹ By most

⁸⁶ See Wooley, ed., *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, 1:113n8.

⁸⁷ On Swift's lost writing, see Williams, ed., *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, 1:page 3.

⁸⁸ Dryden, *Georgics*, IV.558; Swift, "Ode to the Athenian Society," in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, lines 195–99.

⁸⁹ Dryden, *Georgics*, IV.586–88.

⁹⁰ Plato, *Ion*, in *The Early Socratic Dialogues*, ed. and trans. Trevor J. Saunders (New York: Penguin, 2005), 65.

⁹¹ Catherine Ingrassia, *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998), 40.

accounts, contemporary criticisms of the rise of finance were based on the way that speculation replaced skill with chance. On this view the South Sea Bubble was fueled by irrationality: the sheer force of speculative mania and what modern economists call “noise trading,” the necessary but misguided practice of “trading on noise as if it were information.”⁹² While recent economic historians have attempted to soften such claims, this narrative continues to hold influence over literary studies which takes as commonplace the suggestion that the Bubble was caused by the “mania of speculative investment” or “a stream of irrational events.”⁹³ I suspect that part of what makes this story so compelling is the way that it lends itself to accounts of fiction and value which remain central to literary history. Sophie Gee has claimed that “the image common to all South Sea satires was that of a magical (and fraudulent) metamorphosis from an object that was worthless into something of immense value.”⁹⁴ We saw above how Swift’s own suspicion of fantasy and nominal value might fit nicely into this story. As “noise,” as “fictitious stock,” or as a magical, impossible alchemy, the early mechanisms of the market were seen as an assault on the intrinsic value, reason, and real property that he and his neoclassical contemporaries were thought desperately to hold dear.

⁹² Fischer Black, “Noise,” *Journal of Finance* 41 (1986): 529. For another example of claims to irrationality, see also Richard S. Dale, Johnnie E. V. Johnson, and Leilei Tang, “Financial markets can go mad: evidence of irrational behavior during the South Sea Bubble,” *Economic History Review* 18.2 (2005): 233–71.

⁹³ Gee, 83. Nicholson, *Writing and the Rise of Finance: Capital Satires of the Early Eighteenth Century*, 2. Peter Garber includes the South Sea in his account of financial crashes that may be described as “rational bubbles” (*Famous First Bubbles: The Fundamentals of Early Manias* [Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000]). And Helen J. Paul has recently taken research from cliometrics and behavioral finance as evidence against what she describes as the pervasive “gambling mania” thesis in studies of the South Sea Bubble (*The South Sea Bubble: An Economic History of its Origins and Consequences* [New York: Routledge, 2011]).

⁹⁴ Gee, 84. For a genealogy of magic and chance with respect to the eighteenth-century novel see Jesse Molesworth, *Chance and the Eighteenth-Century Novel: Realism, Probability, Magic* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010). I shall return to his excellent study in my next chapter. For literary perspectives on nominal and intrinsic value, see also Lynn Festa’s discussion of the “abstraction of value” in *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2006), 16, 158.

To contemporary witnesses of the crisis, there certainly seemed to be an element of such “noise.” Swift ironically recounts the fall of the “South Sea Babel” in one of his occasional poems on the crisis, and one of his polemical poems on Wood describes the halfpence controversy as “an *Irish* Blunder, / to take the Noise of Brass for Thunder!”⁹⁵ Taking up this legacy, an early issue of *The Craftsman* defines stockjobbing, in the tradition of Swift’s *Examiner*, as “Political Lying.” The writer then describes the irrationality and false value involved in finance by pointing to its unintelligibility: “Here are many People . . . who appear . . . to be Men of *Reason*, and yet, on the first mention of these Syllables *South Sea Stock*, lose at once all reflection and comparison.”⁹⁶ But for Swift this was only one of the more amusing aspects of the problem. The more serious concern was how finance had “introduced a Number of new dextrous Men into Business and Credit.”⁹⁷ On Swift’s account, it’s this new skill for finance, the deliberate “Contrivance and Cunning of *Stock-Jobbers*,” that has introduced “such an unintelligible *Jargon* of Terms to involve it in, as were never known in any other Age or Country of the world.”⁹⁸ For Swift noise does not immediately imply the loss of reason, as economic commentary both then and now might fear, but is rather the effect of an uneven distribution of skill, a specialized terminology that means something only to the few.⁹⁹ Here we might recall Swift’s remedy for political lying: to suppose that “you have heard

⁹⁵ Swift, “The Bubble,” in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, 1:248–59; Swift, “On Wood: The Iron-Monger,” in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, 1:lines 29–30.

⁹⁶ *The Craftsman*, no. 47, 27 May 1727, in Simon Varey, *Lord Bolingbroke: Contributions to the Craftsman* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 13.

⁹⁷ Swift, *Examiner*, no. 14, 6.

⁹⁸ Swift, *Examiner*, no. 14, 7. Daniel Defoe’s “Essay on Publick Credit,” (London, 1710) similarly decries the deceptive force of the new economic jargon, which “not one in forty understands: every man has a concern in it, few know what it is, nor is it easy to define or describe it.”

⁹⁹ See Kevis Goodman, *Georgic Modernity and British Romanticism: Poetry and the Mediation of History* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004), 62–64 for an account of eighteenth-century theories of noise and for her reading of the “noise of history” in Thompson.

some inarticulate sounds.” What’s new about the “South Sea Babel” is that noise has become a useful part of its design, crafted for the benefit of those cunning “dextrous Men.”

Shortly after the publication of “The Bubble,” Matthew Prior makes reference to the poem in a letter to Swift, “I am tyred of politics and lost in the South Sea: the roaring of the Waves and the madness of the people were justly put together.”¹⁰⁰ But to focus on the “madness of the people” is to miss the point of Swift’s critique. While Swift’s deluded bankrupt and his mariner “by a Calenture misled,” who “longs to rove / In that fantastic Scene, and thinks / It must be some enchanted Grove, / And in he leaps, and down he sinks,” provide the first and most memorable images of the poem, Swift soon turns his attention from speculative mania to the more deliberate mechanisms that make crisis possible.¹⁰¹ He signals this turn with the subjunctive mood: “A Moralist might here explain / The Rashness of the Cretan Youth, / Describe his Fall into the Main, / And from a Fable form a Truth.”¹⁰² Ever resistant to arriving at ethical precepts from “form,” Swift instead diagnoses skill and craft as the contemporary problem with finance.¹⁰³ As his speaker goes on to “affirm,” “Directors better know their Tools, / We see the Nation’s Credit crackt, / Each Knave hath made a thousand Fools. . . . If a Sharper once comes in, /

¹⁰⁰ Matthew Prior to Jonathan Swift, 28 February 1721, in *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D. D.*, 4 vol., 2:368. According to Woolley’s recent edition of the correspondence these lines also draw from Sir William Temple’s “Essay on the Original and Nature of the Government,” in which he writes that “the rage of the people is like that of the Sea” (368fn2).

¹⁰¹ Swift, “The Bubble,” in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, 1:30–32.

¹⁰² Swift, “The Bubble,” in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, 1:41–44.

¹⁰³ This is a common pattern in Swift’s work to signal a “moral” and then to go in another direction. He thus writes with a relentlessly displaced irony: “The Moral of the Tale is proper, / Apply’d to Wood’s adult’rate Copper; / Which, as he scatter’d, we like Dolts, / Mistook at first for Thunder-Bolts” (“On Wood: The Iron-Monger,” in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, 1:30–35). While his speaker attests to ridicule the victims of Wood’s fraud, the butt of his satire is rather “Salmoneus” himself, the “made Copper-Smith of Elis” (1–2).

He throws at all, and sweeps the Board.”¹⁰⁴ While most arguments have defined the fraudulence of South Sea Projectors as the act of making promises that could not be kept — the magical claims to be able to create material value from nothing — Swift suggests instead that the workings behind the crash were all too skilled, successful, and deliberate. Swift had earlier referred to the contemporary definition of “bubble” as “to defraud” when he claimed that “we the bubbled Fools [of philosophy] / Spend all our present Stock in hopes of golden Rules.”¹⁰⁵ Identifying with rather than ridiculing the objects of such deceit, Swift’s poem diagnoses skilled malfeasance rather than blind fortune as the central danger of the new political economy.

In a 1727 letter to the Earl of Oxford, Pope laments precisely this feeling that the new craft of finance had been denied to him. Turning to that crucial metaphor of the shipwreck to describe his withdrawal from the stock market, Pope writes, “I am like a man that saves, and lays together, the planks of a broken Ship, or a falling House; but knows not how to rebuild out of them, either one, or the other.”¹⁰⁶ Whereas Pope, that inveterate craftsman, registers his own melancholic bewilderment at a form of “know-how” that remains beyond his reach, Swift uses his materialist poetics to take aim at the very mechanisms that make such an uneven distribution of expertise possible. At a time when early capitalist sleights of hand were beginning to take their full form, Swift insists on making the often invisible workings of new political economies visible. To this end, his doggerel, ephemeral, and “scattered” poetics defiantly set sail for those raging and uncontrollable seas.

¹⁰⁴ Swift, “The Bubble,” in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, 1: lines 57–60, 64–65.

¹⁰⁵ Swift, “Ode to Sir William Temple,” in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, 1: lines 26–27.

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in Nicholson, *Writing and the Rise of Finance: Capital Satires of the Early Eighteenth Century*, 66–67.

The peculiar print materiality of Swift's poems only adds to this embrace of contingency over craft. Written as ephemeral broadsides, "The Bubble" and "The Run Upon the Bankers" offer something like the opposite of the print craftsmanship that helped define high Augustan poetics. Swift's financial poems are neither the impressive folio editions of Dryden's *Georgics* nor the meticulously crafted volumes of Pope. Indeed, Pope and Swift's work on the market crash offer a useful study in contrasts. Whereas much later Pope would express his thoughts on the crisis in his well-curated *Moral Essays*, most especially "The Epistle to Bathurst," Swift's "Bubble" was written in a letter during the same year as the crash.¹⁰⁷ Described casually as "the Thing I promised," the poem was transcribed in Swift's hand onto two and a half pages of folio paper, "closely written in double column," with his letter to Charles Ford written on the remaining blank half page.¹⁰⁸ Ford is supposed to have given the poem its first title "The Bubble" (later "The *South Sea*. 1721" and then "Upon the South-Sea Project" in Faulkner's 1735 edition) and to have sent the copy immediately to print.¹⁰⁹ This ephemeral print history is perhaps matched only by the curious afterlife of his "South Sea Ballad," which was later printed in various editions, some pirated, of "The Bubbler's Medley," a series of eclectic arrangements of poems, images, and even playing cards relating to the crash printed as broadsides and engravings during the latter half of the

¹⁰⁷ For more on this comparison, see Pat Rogers, who notes that "Pope waited several years before he tackled similar themes in a sustained fashion: 'The *Epistle to Bathurst* (1733) is a complex and richly orchestrated composition, not wholly remote from popular idiom but oblique and allusive rather than direct or univocal" ("Plunging in the Southern Waves: Swift's Poem on the Bubble," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 18 [1988]: 41).

¹⁰⁸ Swift to Charles Ford, 15 December 1720, in *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, D. D. 4 vol., 2:354; Williams, Notes to "The Bubble," in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, 3 vol., 1:248.

¹⁰⁹ On the textual history of this poem, see Harold Williams, notes to "The Bubble," in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, 1:248–50 and Woolley, ed., *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, 2:354nn2–5.

period.¹¹⁰ That Swift's poetry would live on in these single-sheet prints which make no claims to posterity seems a rather apt way of expressing his ethics of chance and inevitability.¹¹¹ In its embrace of the temporary and the occasional, the poem exchanges craft for contingency; it takes up rather than disavows the ephemerality and fortune that's so often linked pejoratively to finance.

By insisting on the occasional and ephemeral aspects of print, Swift points the way to a more fragile tradition of georgic than the one determined by a nostalgia for the "real property" of landed economies. He indeed reflected on the temporary nature of his work throughout his career, claiming in a 1731 letter to Pope, "I write Pamphlets and follies merely for amusement, and when they are finished, or I grow weary in the middle, I cast them into the fire, partly out of dislike, and chiefly because they will signify nothing" and concluding his poem on "Drapier's Hill" with the prediction that "His famous LETTERS [will be] made waste Paper."¹¹² This sensitivity to the contingent fate of one's writing helps to anticipate such self-consciously precarious georgics as "Next Year or I Fly my Rounds Tempestuous," handwritten by Lorine Niedecker over pages of a tearaway devotional calendar in 1935.¹¹³ Like Swift's poem-letter on the Bubble, "Next Year" reads as occasional palimpsest. Possibly a Christmas Gift to Louis Zukofsky, and perhaps not intended for publication, the poem adds only a thin sheet of paper, so that the

¹¹⁰ Images of two of these engravings from "The Bubbler's Medley" are available electronically through the Lewis Walpole Library. The print depicting Swift's poem can be found here: <http://hdl.handle.net/10079/bibid/9039371>.

¹¹¹ This resistance to posterity could indeed be what's made the work of editing Swift's poems so taxing. See, for instance, the Preface to Williams's classic edition of Swift's poetry.

¹¹² Swift to Alexander Pope, 15 January 1730–31, in *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D. D.*, 3:355. Swift, "Drapier's Hill," in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, 3:line 17.

¹¹³ Lorine Niedecker, "Next Year I Fly My Rounds Tempestuous," in *Lorine Niedecker: Collected Works*, ed. Jenny Penberthy (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2002), 41–67.

vague shapes of the original text are still faintly visible.¹¹⁴ The turbulence suggested by the title is introduced by the handwritten lines of the first page: “Wade all life / backward to its / source which / runs too far ahead.”¹¹⁵ Taking the transitive “wade” to cast “life” as flowing water that “runs too far ahead,” Niedecker evokes a sense of helplessness through the slight content of the lines and through their ephemeral medium. Her impossible and cryptic imperative undermines individual agency in favor of a more fragile version of the georgic command.

As these poems help to show, even when set on the sturdiest ground, there remains in georgic a sense of being “tossed by ill-fortunes waves.” The calendar pages of Niedecker’s poem, indeed, help to point back to this history. As she writes on the next page, “The satisfactory / emphasis is on / revolving. / Don’t send steadily; after / you know me / I’ll be no one.”¹¹⁶ Preceded by another unattainable georgic imperative (“Don’t send steadily”), the poem, in its “emphasis . . . on revolving,” highlights the contingency inherent in earlier landed georgics. Whether in Dryden’s “round circuit of the year” or in Stephen Duck’s more pained account of “the Year’s revolving course,” the georgic mode shares a similar, if less explicit, sensibility to the helpless postures of agricultural labor. Claiming in “The Thresher’s Labor,” itself something of an early calendar poem, “To sing the Toils of each revolving Year; / Those endless Toils, which always grow anew, / And the poor Thresher’s destin’d to pursue,” Stephen Duck transforms the endless and inevitable turn of the seasons into an expression of

¹¹⁴ Niedecker’s recent editor Jenny Penberthy makes the claim that they were probably a gift to Zukofsky and discusses how William Carlos Williams was impressed by the “last year’s X-Mas Calendar” series.

¹¹⁵ Niedecker, 41.

¹¹⁶ Niedecker, 42.

exploitative and repetitive labor.¹¹⁷ With its relentless, labored motion through time, with its “Year’s revolving course” of Sisyphean labor from which no “respite . . . can be found,” Duck’s poem helps to show that even the most conventional georgic verse adds to this feeling that life “runs too far ahead.”¹¹⁸

There’s something deeply pessimistic — which is perhaps to say, Swiftian — about recovering the work of fortune from georgic. Indeed, the ephemerality of his poems on finance anticipate what he would later articulate as a tragic view of action. In his letter of condolence to Mrs. Moore over the loss of her daughter, he writes that “life is a tragedy, wherein we sit as spectators awhile, and then act our own part in it.”¹¹⁹ As Swift goes on to admit, his own “ill disposition” at the time, just before Stella’s death, might have made him “a sorry comforter.” But while the letter, which also proposes “self-love” as the “sole cause of our grief,” may offer little solace, it also provides some insight into the importance of contingency to Swift’s worldview. Such a logic of tragedy is not unlike that of the broadside medium: there’s a certain militancy to the broadside, with its connotations of an attack or the shooting of a gun, but there’s also a sense that, in its print ephemerality, it remains vulnerable to contingent effects. This yields an odd mixture of activism and pessimism that, I’ve suggested, gets at the heart of georgic poetry.¹²⁰ In these moments, we might begin to see georgic as less a celebration of labor than a reflection on labor’s inherent precariousness — as itself something of a tragic mode.

¹¹⁷ Stephen Duck, *The Thresher’s Labour*, ed. E. P. Thompson (London: Merlin Press, 1989), page 1.

¹¹⁸ Duck, 12.

¹¹⁹ Swift to Mrs. Moore, 27 December 1727, in *The Works of Jonathan Swift, D. D.*, 2nd ed., ed. Sir Walter Scott (Edinburgh, 1824), 169.

¹²⁰ Goodman has begun this work with her account, through Wordsworth, of the labor of Orpheus’s mourning in *Georgic IV*, but I’d extend her insight that “it is easy to underestimate the pattern that consistently defines *labor* as fundamentally reparative or restitutive, precarious and subject to lapse” to the earlier and ostensibly strident works of georgic neoclassicism, as well as to Swift’s georgics of the sea (113).

We'll return to Swift's tragic view of action and protest in the dissertation's coda on the novel, but our discussion of Swift's specifically poetic legacy of georgic isn't quite finished.¹²¹ Fairly late in his career, he claimed to "remember to have published nothing but what is called the 'Drapier's Letters,' and some few other trifles relating to the affairs of this miserable and ruined kingdom. What other things fell from me (chiefly in verse) were only amusements in hours of sickness or leisure, . . . but were never intended for public view, which is plain from the subjects and the careless way of handling them."¹²² As we've seen, this contingent view of his printed writings, which "fall" from him as mere "trifles," is key to his version of the ethics of poetry. From the first, painful conception of an idea to its "careless" distribution in print, Swift undermines his own agency in the material construction of verse. Claiming to be "only a Man of Rhimes, and that upon Trifles, never having written serious Couplets in my life," Swift offers a useful way in to the georgic legacy of "trivia" that provides the subject for my next chapter.¹²³ It is to the ethics and poetics of the trifle, in the context of consumer culture and mock georgic, that I now turn.

¹²¹ I'm thinking here of Macpherson's groundbreaking argument that the novel is a tragic mode in *Harm's Way*, which I take up in further detail in my coda. (Sandra Macpherson, *Harm's Way: Tragic Responsibility and the Novel Form* [Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2010]).

¹²² Swift to Rev. Dr. Henry Jenny, 8 June 1732, in *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D. D.*, vol. 3.

¹²³ Swift to Charles Wogan, July – 2 August 1732, in *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D. D.*, 3:515.

Chapter 4: Mock Georgic and the *Trivia* of Industry

What makes the commodity a “trivial thing”? For Marx, it only seems to be so at first glance. “A commodity appears,” he writes in his oft-quoted critique of the commodity fetish, “at first sight, an extremely obvious, trivial thing. But its analysis brings out that it is a very strange thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties.” Marx’s commodity only appears “trivial” insofar as “it is a use-value” and its properties are understood to be “the product of human labour”: “It is absolutely clear,” Marx maintains, “that, by his activity, man changes the forms of the materials of nature in such a way as to make them useful to him.”¹ A commodity’s triviality, in other words, is an effect of its fetishization: it appears something like the mere consequence of matter being shaped into form, a table being made out of wood, but that is to ignore the magical social relations that lie behind its very existence.

This chapter tracks the way in which the “trivial” in at least two of the senses provided by Marx above has its origins in the eighteenth-century consumer society. First, in its obviousness or extravagance, the initial quality of being needless to say and easily understood, Marx’s trivial commodity inherits the language of frivolity and unnecessary that comes with the birth of Enlightenment commercial society.² In what John Brewer and Neil McKendrick have influentially tracked as the consumer revolution in eighteenth-century England, “Men, and in particular women, bought as never before.”³

¹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, 3 vol., trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin, 1990), 1:163.

² See John Brewer, “‘The Most Polite Age and the Most Vicious’: Attitudes towards Culture as a Commodity, 1660–1880,” in *The Consumption of Culture 1600–1800: Image, Object, Text*, ed. Ann Bermingham and John Brewer (New York: Routledge, 1995), 341–61.

³ Neil McKendrick, “The Consumer Revolution of Eighteenth-Century England,” in *The Birth of the Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Neil McKendrick, John

As people began to shop beyond their basic needs, a discourse of triviality began to thrive. Thus, Nicholas Barbon could claim as early as 1690 that it “is not Necessity that causeth Consumption” but rather “the wants of the Mind, Fashion and the desire of Novelities and Things Scarce that causeth Trade.”⁴ The second sense of “trivia” isn’t obvious at all. Whereas Marx opposes the magic, or “the phantasmagoric form of a relation between things” to the more easily understood “products of men’s hands,” those two things enjoyed a more fluid coexistence in the early eighteenth century. A name for the goddess Hecate, Trivia also held important connotations of witchcraft. The figure circulated widely not just in translations of Hesiod, Virgil, Ovid, and other classical texts, but even in descriptions of the problems of everyday life.⁵ Like those better-known female figures of rapid economic change, Lady Credit, Lady Fortune — and, as we saw in the last chapter, the Goddess of Political Lying — Trivia demonstrates one fairly common and recurrent way in which women were scapegoated under new, morally suspect modes of consumer behavior. Whether in designating woman’s conspicuous consumption or her dangerous arts of deception, “trivia” held a special place in understanding the fast-changing economies of the early eighteenth century.

“Trivial things” are scattered all over the British Enlightenment.⁶ From bodkins to Birmingham toys, from minor social embarrassments to mismanaged economies, they

Brewer, and J. H. Plumb (London: Europa Publications Limited, 1982), 9. See also John Brewer and Roy Porter, ed., *Consumption and the World of Goods* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

⁴ Nicholas Barbon, *A Discourse of Trade* (London, 1690). On the intellectual origins of the consumer revolution in the 1690s, see Neil McKendrick, “The Consumer Revolution of Eighteenth-Century England,” 13–19.

⁵ As Pat Rogers notes, this particular connotation of *Trivia* as the goddess Hecate in Gay’s poem has long been overlooked by critics. See Rogers, “Why ‘Trivia?’ Myth, Etymology, and Topography,” *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* 12.3 (2005): 19–31.

⁶ The specific phrase in fact comes up in a treatise on ridicule: “How fatiguing a thing it is to hear those People, who use select Words in their Discourse, to express the most trivial Things? Is there any need of studying for a Periphrasis to call for Drink, or to ask what a Clock ’tis . . . These fashionable Words,

bring with them the sense of unnecessary that you might expect from early and vexed discourses of luxury; but they also retain the sense of magic to which, for Marx, the trivial object, seemingly and in reality, is opposed. Both senses are quite clearly in play in John Gay's mock georgic poem, *Trivia*. Wary of "descend[ing] into trivial song," he nonetheless begins by invoking the "goddess Trivia" who leads him through the dark streets of London, and he continues to navigate between the two senses at once. For Gay, the two are not so mutually opposed as one might at first assume. Describing the "magic" that one faces when walking the streets of London in terms of the street-cheat, Gay extends the story of how craft becomes craftiness into the realm of the incipient consumer society. The result is an odd blend of wonder and suspicion about such historical, social, and economic change.

As urban georgic, *Trivia* seems to announce its aim quite clearly: to provide a realist antidote to georgic's chronic failure to accurately represent the world. Whereas georgics often and inevitably become pastoralized celebrations of the laboring life — John Barrell influentially argues that "more actualized" images of rural labor did not enter into poetry until the latter part of the century — the movement to the city offers a more honest picture of the world.⁷ Hence, Richard Steele's claim in the *Tatler* preface to Swift's *Description of Morning* that unlike earlier landscape poets, Swift "never forms Fields, or Nymphs, or Groves, where they are not, but makes the Incidents just as they really appear." With his turn to an urban setting, Swift "describe[s] things exactly as they

wherewith you think to embellish your Discourse give you an effeminate and ridiculous Air; you think you are applauded when people ridicule and sneer you" (Jean Baptiste Morvan, *Reflexions upon Ridicule; Or, What it is that Makes a Man Ridiculous* [London, 1706], 94).

⁷ John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Landscape Painting, 1730–1840* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1980), 6–7.

happen,” not only placing the reader “in town” but more precisely “at this end of town, where my kinsman at present lodges.”⁸ Often accompanied by the epithet “honest,” John Gay has been taken as a key figure for this more honest and exact version of the georgic mode.⁹ Gay has long been lauded by critics for his “landscape of labor,” his “unwavering urban realism,” and his emphasis on praxis and experience.¹⁰

I take Gay’s poem as my case study because although it tends to be read as a poem that succeeds in giving a more honest picture of labor and the poor, that honest labor very quickly cedes to contemporary worries over the loss of craftsmanship, the rise of fraud and luxury, and all of the negative associations that the term “trivia” would have held in the period. Taking Gay’s poem as a crucial precursor to the mode of industrialized georgics at midcentury, John Dyer’s *The Fleece* and Richard Jago’s *Edge-Hill*, I will argue that these poems rehearse the fall of craft labor that occurs alongside the rise of the consumer society. In each of these georgics, language of skill and dexterity descends into the language of craftiness and deceit. By reading these poems against the intertwined

⁸ Richard Steele, *The Tatler*, no. 9, 28 April 1709, ed. Donald F. Bond (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), 80.

⁹ Gay’s twentieth-century biographer for instance writes: “This adjective *honest* is applied to him more frequently than any other. Just as the contemporaries of Shakespeare always spoke of him as gentle Shakespeare, so men of Gay’s time were continually recalling honest John Gay, the honest speech of Gay, the inflexible honesty of Gay” (William Henry Irving, *John Gay: Favorite of the Wits* [Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1940], 308).

¹⁰ David Alff quotes John Murdoch’s phrase here: “Extending georgic’s emphasis on the work of husbandry, what John Murdoch calls the mode’s ‘landscape of labor,’ *Trivia* foregrounds the beings who toiled against London’s ‘entropic tendency’” (Alff, “Before Infrastructure: The Poetics of Paving in John Gay’s *Trivia*,” *PMLA* 132.5 [2017]: 1140). Another critic writes that “the detailed realism of *Trivia*, with its pictures of city labors and city crime, is a further attempt to present an environment directly; in its three sections we see the life of the town as it is, not as the court and the fashionable urban mimics of the court fancy it to be” (Sven M. Armens, *John Gay: Social Critic* [New York: King’s Crown Press, Columbia Univ. Press, 1954], 9–10). And Paddy Bullard writes that Gay’s poem is concerned with a “knowledge acquired through a certain disposition of attentiveness to the world rather than through habitual, repeated practice”: “By determining so carefully the particular kind of knowledge with which *Trivia* is concerned, John Gay indicates that his art of walking has the superior status of *praxis* art as opposed to the mechanical art of technicians” (“The Scriblerian Mock-Arts: Pseudo-Technical Satire in Swift and His Contemporaries” *Studies in Philology* 110.3 [2013]: 631).

histories of trivia and magic, I will demonstrate how georgic displaced larger anxieties about the loss of craft labor onto disenfranchised classes, most especially women and London's poor.

A crucial part of the story of craftsmanship in eighteenth-century georgic has been the overwhelming concern that something was being lost. In looking to the "trivia" of pre-industrial England, I return to the context of my first chapter, in which writers invoked craft poetics in response to the increasing commodification of art and the intellectual origins of the consumer society in the 1690s. This last chapter also extends the debates surrounding mercantilism and agrarian capitalism in Pope's poetry by considering the way in which arguments for luxury and buying beyond one's needs risk the diminishment — perhaps even the trivialization — of craft labor. In narrating the reproduction and degradation of art, I will argue, Gay signals a georgic precarity that exists from Hesiod onward but that has been overshadowed by accounts of georgic's celebration of labor. I have already introduced one version of georgic's precariousness in Swift, finance, and the georgics of the south sea: now I'll suggest that the rise of the consumer society continues that tradition which privileges contingency over craft — though with a very different set of concerns — and makes a crucial step toward georgic's receding in favor of the rise of the novel of accident (the subject of my coda).

The limits of craft labor are perhaps most vividly expressed by the material of what follows. Tracking the trivialization of georgic, labor, and poetry from early eighteenth-century urban georgics to the beginnings of industrial modernity at midcentury, I will argue that craft — and along with it, georgic — becomes increasingly outmoded alongside the rise of industry and the corresponding rise of the consumer

society. If Dryden and Pope sought to bring georgic to its height by formalizing artisanal practices for the sake of a seditious and oppositional poetics, then these mock and mechanized georgics enact the marginalization of such craft practices by placing them under suspicion within the context of the rise of the commodity and the counterfeit amid an ascendant commercial society. Gay persists in undermining the craft of his own poetry. In evacuating his work of craft in this way he seems to anticipate John Dyer's *The Fleece*, which incited Johnson to sound georgic's death knell by claiming that "the subject, Sir, cannot be made poetical."¹¹ He also helps to lay crucial groundwork for the last "true georgic" of the period, Richard Jago's *Edge-Hill*, which takes the counterfeit Birmingham toy industry as its subject.¹² Each of these poems take up the notion of "the trivial," in its many senses of frivolity, deception, and fraud. In this respect, the concept would become instrumental to the end of georgic as well as to the fall of craft.

"Trivia" enters the eighteenth century as a question about moral and economic value. The word circulated in the Renaissance most often in reference to Hecate or Diana, or as part of the occasional Christian admonition. William Prynne, for instance, warns against the sinfulness of popular stage plays, in which men are "trained up in the *Schoole of Vice*, the Play-house . . . to act those womanish, whorish parts, which Pagans would even blush to personate," by pointing to the dangers of such seemingly trivial things:

¹¹ James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, ed. David Womersley (New York: Penguin, 2008), 506.

¹² The eight "true georgics" are: "John Philip's *Cyder* (1708), John Gay's *Rural Sports* (1713; revised 1720), James Thomson's *The Seasons* (the collected edition in 1730), William Somervile's *The Chace* (1735), Christopher Smart's *The Hop-Garden* (1752), John Dyer's *The Fleece* (1757), James Grainger's *The Sugar-Cane* (1764), and Richard Jago's *Edge-Hill* (1767)" (Rachel Crawford, *Poetry, Enclosure, and the Vernacular Landscape, 1700–1830* [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002], 268n6).

“And is this a laudable, as many; *a trivial, veniall, harmelesse thing, as most repute it?* Is this a light, a despicable effeminacie, for men, for Christians, thus to adulterate, emasculate, metamorphose, and debase their noble sexe?”¹³ For Prynne, the central problem with these immoral, effeminate stage plays is that they market their own levity. “How ever men may chance to light them as meere triviall, venial sins,” he continues, such actions are in reality the “most damnable soule-murthering abominations.”¹⁴ This sort of logic continues in Samuel Fisher’s *Rusticus ad Academicos* (1660), though with a decidedly more hermeneutic bent. The satire on scriptural interpretation begins by noting that “*we do not with the misty Ministers . . . of the meer Letter . . . own the bare External Text of Scripture . . . to be . . . entire in every Tittle, Letter, Vowel, Syllable and Jota, & the self same without any losse, as it was at the first giving out.*”¹⁵ These “trivial tittles” — that is, the tiny print markings on a page — remain a recurring worry throughout Fisher’s inflated text. Riffing on the rhyme between “tittle” and “little” in a description of Apollo, he invokes the trivial to condemn wasted efforts: “Yet for every [not to say *Tittittle*] but *Tittle* and *little* in it is he so loud that he labours and looks to be heard and heeded as far off as beyond Sea by Capellus and [o]ther Divines, against whom he tiresomely talks about *trivial matters*.”¹⁶ Having converted to Quakerism several years before writing the text, Fisher has little patience for the “trivial tittles” which are only accidental to Holy Truth. Both here and as the guise for Prynne’s dangerously womanish stage plays, “trivia” comes to mean something like immoral excess or frivolity.

¹³ William Prynne, *Histrion-mastix* (London, 1633), 172.

¹⁴ Prynne, 376.

¹⁵ Samuel Fisher, *Rusticus ad Academicos* (London, 1660), epistle to the reader.

¹⁶ Fisher, 45.

The term brings with it an increasing number of economic anxieties over the course of the period. In Henry Peacham's *The Worth of a Penny; Or, A Caution to Keep Money*, written in 1641 but widely reprinted in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the trifle is a greater threat to one's personal finances than the big expense. "Men commonly are very cautious in purchasing Bargains of great Value, as buying of Houses, Horses, or rich Apparel, or any other Commodity of the like nature," he warns early on in the treatise, "but for small expences, as a Penny or two Pence at a time, that many trifle away, about trivial things, and are altogether regardless of."¹⁷ Trivia looms over the eighteenth century as a threat to productivity and improvement. As one London Merchant confesses in his memoir, "I did not make the best use of my time, but spent too many Hours trivially and to little purpose; but upon recollection would always check and condemn myself, as every Man must needs do who considers the preciousness of time." "How contrary a trifling and idle Life is," he goes on, "to the Methods of our great and wonderful Creator."¹⁸

Such attention to even the most "trifling" aspects of both personal and political economy in fact gains center stage in what Max Weber influentially defines as the "spirit of capitalism." Quoting a sermon from Benjamin Franklin as the best illustration of this spirit, Weber makes clear the importance of trivial losses and gains. "The most trifling actions that affect a man's credit are to be regarded," claims Franklin: "If you take the pains at first to mention particulars, it will have this good effect; you will discover how wonderfully small, trifling expenses mount up to large sums."¹⁹ The term indeed often

¹⁷ Henry Peacham, *The Worth of a Penny. Or, a Caution to keep Money* (Dublin, 1704), 13.

¹⁸ Thomas Tryon, *Some Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Tho. Tryon, late of London, merchant* (London, 1705), 44.

¹⁹ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the "Spirit" of Capitalism* (New York: Penguin, 2002), 10.

signals a failure of prosperity or vehicle for deceit. A trades history on the Art of Distilling admonishes against attempts “to baffle and banter the World, by putting great Names on Trivia[!] Medicines, imposing by false Glasses, to make your Market the greater.”²⁰ An almost Swiftian complaint about jargon, the passage uses trivia to describe a false exchange of the seemingly great for that which in reality is little. Trivia circulates as an anxiety over wasted time and false or deceitful economies — a key term for tracing the exchange of craft for craftiness across Enlightenment British literature and political economy.

In navigating between concerns both great and little, neoclassical British georgics were perhaps especially suited to such a task. Virgil writes in his foundational analogy of the work of bees to a well-run political state:

If little things with great we may compare,
Such are the Bees, and such their busie Care:
Studious of Honey, each in his Degree,
The youthful Swain, the grave experience'd Bee:
That in the Field; this in Affairs of State,
Employ'd at home, abides within the Gate:²¹

Tying the vast smith-work of *Cyclops* on Mount Aetna to the humble industry of bees, Virgil invokes a scalar comparison that would later provide the framework for a crucial thread of British neoclassical satire: the mock heroic. The moment is quoted almost verbatim in Pope's georgic *Windsor Forest*. The ironic tone offers some respite from the poem's otherwise overconfident imperialist panegyric:

But when the tainted Gales the Game betray,
Couch'd close he lyes, and meditates the Prey;

²⁰ William Y-Worth, *The Compleat Distiller: Or, the Whole Art of Distillation Practically Stated* (London, 1705), 199–200.

²¹ John Dryden, *The Georgics*, in *The Works of John Dryden*, 20 vol., ed. William Frost and Vinton A. Dearing (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1990), 5:book IV, lines 256–61.

Secure they trust th'unfaithful Field, beset,
 Till hov'ring o'er 'em sweeps the swelling Net.
 Thus (if small Things we may with great compare)
 When *Albion* sends her eager Sons to War,
 Pleas'd, in the Gen'ral's Sight, the Host lye down
 Sudden, before some unsuspecting Town,
 The Young, the Old, one Instant makes our Prize,
 And high in Air *Britannia's* Standard flies.²²

Virgil's model allows Pope to ironically trivialize war through the language of hunting and predation. Diminishing the weight of the epic simile by setting it off in parentheticals, Pope undermines the glory of war by comparing it to hunting with a net — sweeping the board of some “unsuspecting Town” and levelling “the Young, the Old” as one instant “our Prize.”

Virgil's language helped pave the way for Pope's satires against consumer society later on. That is of course the central joke of *The Rape of the Lock*: that the heroic deeds of the *Iliad* are incompatible with the values and trivial worries of British fashionable society.²³ The satiric miniaturization of epic owes a great debt to Virgil's georgic comparison of great with little, “si parva licet componere magnis.”²⁴ And set in the context of an incipient consumer society, the language of scalar comparison and mock epic incompatibility also participates in a historical shift in notions of craftsmanship. Pope's initial couplet — “What dire offense from am'rous causes springs, / What mighty contests rise from trivial things” — introduces the poem's conceit by invoking trivia; and the verb “rises” recalls Addison's classic early version of the commodity fetish, in which

²² Alexander Pope, *Windsor Forest*, in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1967), line 101–10.

²³ On trivia in neoclassical satire see Arthur Sherbo, “Virgil, Dryden, Gay, and Matters Trivial,” *PMLA* 85.5 (1970): 1063–71.

²⁴ Virgil, *The Georgics*, in *The Georgics of Virgil: Bilingual Edition*, trans. David Ferry (29 BCE; New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), page 154.

“the brocade Petticoat rises out of the Mines of Peru.”²⁵ Alongside their dazzling descriptions of commodities and consumerism, I will suggest, is a lament about the loss of craftsmanship. The background to these mock-heroic poems is a world in which craft labor is quickly going out of style.

Perhaps this is why trivia is given such a mixed treatment by poets of the period. To avoid it is one of the central rules of neoclassical poetry. Horace warns in the *Ars Poetica* that “you must not copy trivial things, / Nor Word for Word too faithfully translate.”²⁶ (One translation by William Soames and Dryden has “trivial accidents.”)²⁷ And Pope’s description of Timon’s villa as “huge heaps of littleness” similarly takes scale as the measure of bad aesthetics. But there’s also a degree of irony in the way that poets would sometimes deride the trivial. Pope warns in a 1714 letter that may have been in reference to Gay’s early composition of *Trivia*: having “contracted a severity of aspect from deep meditation on high subjects, equal to the formidable front of black-browed Jupiter, . . . I cannot consent to your publication of the ludicrous trifling burlesque you write about.”²⁸ Coming from the author of *Peri Bathos* and *The Rape of the Lock*, such a “severity of aspect” cannot but sound a little ironical. Gay might be said to respond in kind by mixing praise and ridicule in his depiction of trivia.

²⁵ Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, canto I, lines 1–2. Pope may well have had Addison in mind when he set out to describe Belinda at her toilette: “The single Dress of a Woman of Quality is often the Product of an Hundred Climates. The Muff and the Fan come together from the different Ends of the Earth. The Scarf is sent from the Torrid Zone, and the Tippet from beneath the Pole. The Brocade Petticoat rises out of the Mines of Peru, and the Diamond Necklace out of the Bowels of Indostan” (Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, no. 69, 19 May 1711, in *The Commerce of Everyday Life: Selections from The Tatler and The Spectator*, ed. Erin Mackie [Boston: Bedford St. Martin’s, 1998], 205).

²⁶ Horace, *Horace: The Art of Poetry, By the Earl of Roscommon* (London, 1709), 7.

²⁷ Nicolas Boileau-Desperaux, *The Art of Poetry* translated in French and then made English by William Soames, Since Revis’d By Dryden (London, 1710), 27.

²⁸ Pope, “Letter XII. Mr. Pope To Mr. Gay,” 4 May 1714, in *The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq.*, 8 vol. (London, 1847), 8:23.

Gay's poem begins from a posture of authorial self-diminishment: "The world, I believe, will take so little Notice of me, that I need not take much of it."²⁹ Not merely a direct address to his critics, the "little" introduces the sort of miniaturization that would become central to his contribution to the georgic mode. Throughout, Gay undermines *Trivia*'s status as a work of literature. He ends the poem with a mock celebration of the commodification of his art:

When W* and G**, mighty names, are dead;
Or but at Chelsea under Custards read;
When Criticks crazy bandboxes repair,
And Tragedies, turn'd Rockets, bounce in Air;
High-rais'd on *Fleetstreet* Posts, consign'd to Fame,
This Work shall shine, and Walkers bless my Name.
(IV.411–16)

These last three couplets seem at first to express that recurrent anxiety of Augustan poetics: that their poetic lines be used instead for the material paper on which they're written, to line cake tins and in this case even to light fireworks. The worry stretches well back to Horace, who asks that his own virtues not be "extolled in hideous lines": "I'd probably flush on receiving so coarse a tribute; in no time / I'd be laid in a closed box beside my poetic admirer, / then carried down to the street that deals in perfume and incense / and pepper, and anything else that's wrapped in useless pages."³⁰ In both cases, poetic fame and admiration seems bathetically reduced to "mere waste paper," as Swift put it at the end of my last chapter. There is indeed an underlying sense of the trivial, as

²⁹ John Gay, *Trivia; or, The Art of Walking the Streets of London*, in *John Gay: Poetry and Prose*, 2. vol., ed. Vinton Dearing (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), Advertisement. Hereafter cited parenthetically by book and line number.

³⁰ Pope translates the lines thus: "And when I flatter, let my dirty leaves / (Like Journals, Odes, and such forgotten things / As Eusden, Philips, Settle, writ of Kings) / Cloath spice, line trunks, or flutt'ring in a row, / Befringe the rails of Bedlam and Soho" (*The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace Imitated*, in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, lines 415–19).

the original Latin of the Horace's last clause, "et quicquid chartis amicitur ineptis" might be more literally translated as "and whatever else is wrapped in trifling paper," with "ineptis" referring to that which is "senseless, silly, trifl[ing]." A neat reversal of the georgic heightening at the center of British neoclassicism, Gay turns the "best Poem of the best Poet" into the everyday trifle; he applies "the Most Compleat, Elaborate, and finisht Piece of all Antiquity" to the humble art of walking in London. In contrast to the craft poetics of Dryden and Pope, Gay enacts rather than resists the commodification of literature.

But at the same time, Gay's satire pushes against precisely the confusion of "uselessness" with the trivial that's implied by Horace's "trifling paper." For, as he's at pains to remind his reader, a poem about the "Art of Walking the Streets of London" is anything but useless. Repeatedly referring to the poem as his "useful lays," something like the "implements" he describes for navigating a new urban environment, Gay unites trivia with that crucial second half of Horace's own formula for the art of poetry, *dulce et utile*.³¹ If anything, the last lines of Gay's poem only reassert the use-value of his urban georgic. In proposing to raise the work on Fleetstreet posts, Gay's speaker comes close to those advisory notices on the London tube that, for Virginia Woolf, divorce good literature from craft labor. We saw earlier how for Woolf "there is something incongruous, unfitting, about the term 'craftsmanship' when applied to words."³² Gay proclaims something like the opposite approach to his poetics. Invoking and burlesquing both senses of "craft" given by Woolf — the "making [of] useful objects out of solid

³¹ The subtitle of Book I reads, "Of the Implements for walking the Streets, and Signs of the Weather."

³² Virginia Woolf, "Craftsmanship," in *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays* (1942; San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1974), 198.

matter — for example, a pot, a chair, a table,” or “cajolery, cunning, deceit” — Gay’s speaker makes a case for georgic’s use-value, casting the poem as an extended version of the phrase, “Do not lean out of the window.”³³ (One hears perhaps an ironic echo of the Marxian commodity in Woolf’s example of the useful “table.”) Toward the end of Book II, Gay petitions his printer, “O, Lintott, let my Labours obvious lie, / Rang’d on thy Stall, for ev’ry curious Eye;” invoking precisely such language of use: “So shall the Poor these Precepts *gratis* know, / And to my Verse their future Safeties owe” (II.565). Here Gay casts his poem as something like “a good Surtout” — material protection from the dangers and contingencies of modern life.

By ending on Fleet Street, where many contemporary advertisements would have been posted, Gay firmly situates his poem amid contemporary social changes and the new logic of consumerism. As Barbara Benedict has noted, one of the earliest forms of advertisement was the public sign. Both there and in the smaller scale of print, the “quasi-literary genre” of advertising increasingly had a way of intruding into one’s daily life, “crawling over walls and corners eating into newspapers and books, absorbing the physical and mental space writers might have filled with their own language.”³⁴ Alongside this new urban commercial landscape was also a shifting notion of craftsmanship.³⁵ The form of the advertisement indeed runs directly counter to the deliberate, craft poetics of Dryden and Pope. Describing the advertisement’s “rhetoric of

³³ Woolf, 198, 199.

³⁴ Barbara M. Benedict, “Encounters with the Object: Advertisements, Time, and Literary Discourse in the Early Eighteenth-Century Thing-Poem,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 40.2 (2007): 195.

³⁵ Benedict discusses for instance how Tudor craftsmen would use “familiar emblems, like the Hand for glovers and the Key for locksmiths and ironmongers,” which had the effect of commodification — “identifying their trade with a quintessential object” and thus depicting “their products as duplications of the prototype” (195). Gay himself plays on this idea with the emblem key, and, as I’ve suggested, by casting his own poetry as advertisement.

extemporaneity,” the “repetition, direct addresses to the reader, an apparently artless torrent of words,” Benedict notes how such techniques would “conceal art to authenticate the product for sale.” By diminishing the crafted nature of the text, copyists could “imply that their products need no devious selling techniques because their virtues speak, and speak simply, for themselves.”³⁶ Here we see one of the more central mechanisms of the fall of craftsmanship. A well-written copy breeds suspicion, and so Fleet Street advertisements would deliberately evacuate their language of craft in order to sell their products. Diminishing art for authenticity, Gay, too, trivializes craftsmanship. Claiming that his own poetry is most useful as something like the “trifling paper” that would be posted on London’s streets, he foregrounds the ephemerality rather than the artistry of his text.

Even in its name, “mock georgic” suggests a worry over the lack of craftsmanship. *Trivia*, indeed, pretends to walk a fine line between literature and the counterfeit.³⁷ Announcing from the start that he “owe[s] several Hints of it to Dr. Swift,” Gay trades Augustan imitation for something closer to reproduction. Not simply an homage to Swift’s mock or anti-georgic “Description” poems, Gay’s *Trivia* cribs directly from the Dean’s verse. Writing of “sure prognosticks” and “chimney sweepers,” the poem asks to be called derivative — counterfeit, even. Take, for instance, the following

³⁶ Benedict, 198.

³⁷ William Morris for instance invokes the term “mockery” to level his critique against “useless toil”: “Nay, the workers must even lend a hand to the great industrial invention of the age — adulteration, and by its help produce for their own use shams and mockeries of the luxury of the rich; for the wage-earners must always live as the wage-payers bid them, and their very habits of life are *forced* on them by their masters” (“Useful Work versus Useless Toil,” in *News from Nowhere and Other Writings*, ed. Clive Wilmer [London: Penguin, 2004], 292).

passage, which revisits the “tracing of lines” that I read in relation to Hogarth in the previous chapter:

The little Chimney-sweeper skulks along,
And marks with sooty Stains the heedless Throng;
When Small-coal murmurs in the hoarser Throat,
From smutty Dancers guard thy threaten'd Coat:
The Dust-man's cart offends thy Cloaths and Eyes,
When through a Street a Cloud of Ashes flies;
But whether Black, or lighter Dyes are worn,
The Chandler's Basket, on his Shoulder born,
With Tallow spots thy Coat; resign the Way,
To shun the surly Butcher's greasy Tray,
Butchers, whose Hands are dy'd with Blood's soul Stain,
And always foremost in the Hangman's Train.
(II.24–44)

This moment might easily be read as a joke to his critics. Accused of not having written his own works — the poem's Advertisement for instance alludes to Colley Cibber's suggestion that his 1715 farce *What D'Ye Call It* had been written mostly by Pope — Gay staves off any such claims by writing a self-consciously messier version of Swift's earlier lines.³⁸ Swift's “brushy strokes” and “lines to trace” — those poetic lines that, in anticipation of Hogarth, helped to mark the medium specificity of verse — are here rendered as “sooty Stains,” “marks” of the contingent life of the modern London pedestrian. Where Dryden and Pope respond to threats of commodification with a heightened poetic craftsmanship, Gay gives in to new commercial processes by writing of stain, grease, and dye. His walker wears the residue of industry, and through the direct comparison with Swift Gay's lines ask to be read as something closer to the uncrafted ad-copy of Fleet Street.

³⁸ See Clare Brant and Susan E. Whyman, ed., *Walking the Streets of Eighteenth-Century London: John Gay's Trivia (1716)* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007), 220.

Gay even makes a joke on georgic scale by diminishing Swift's laboring figure into "The little Chimney-sweeper [who] skulks along." He casts his own poem as a "little" version of Swift's: a trivialization of georgic that sets it within the world of commodities. For not only does Gay's poem deliberately run the risk of seeming derivative; it also describes itself as a faulty version of Swift's product. He indeed directly mimics the opening of Swift's mock georgic "Description of a City Shower" by addressing the reader at the beginning of Book I, "And when too short the modish Shoes are worn, / You'll judge the Seasons by your shooting Corn" (I.39–40). Here Gay brings Swift's georgic more explicitly into consumer culture by applying Swift's original — "A coming shower your shooting corns presage, / Old aches throb, your hollow tooth will rage" — to the perilous world of modern fashion. Gay's version also playfully invites comparison between his own potentially counterfeit text and the hazards of poorly made shoes. "Should the big Laste extend the Shoe too wide," he warns a few lines earlier, "Each Stone will wrench th'unwary Step aside: / The sudden Turn may stretch the swelling Vein, / The cracking Joint unhinge, or Ankle sprain" (I.35–38). People and machines come together in his description of "cracking joints [becoming] unhinge[d]," and the hazards of walking in London double as a joke on the counterfeit. One finds little protection from the contingent movement of the seasons in Gay's world: "Let firm, well-hammer'd Soles protect thy Feet / Thro' freezing Snows, and Rains, and soaking Sleet," he cautions. Whereas earlier writers posited craft as a stay against the contingencies of modern life, Gay's trifling paper appears to provide only a weak anchor.

I suggested in the dissertation's introduction that virtue has a long history of being tied to craft labor. As Plutarch suggests in the *Life of Pericles*, the "moral good"

distinguishes itself from fortune inasmuch as it both requires and incites “practice and exercise”: “It inspires an impulse to practice, and influences the mind and character not by a mere imitation which we look at, but by the statement of the fact creates a moral purpose which we form.”³⁹ Fortune, by contrast, is devoid of any such moral praxis. Plutarch makes the distinction quite clear by defining fortune as mere possession: “the goods of fortune we would possess and would enjoy; those of virtue we long to practice and exercise: we are content to receive the former from others, the latter we wish others to experience from us.”⁴⁰ For Plutarch, fortune is set firmly in the world of exchange — we are content to receive rather than to practice it — while virtue encourages cultivation and improvement. In writing his georgic of an incipient consumer society, Gay leans hard on the former. He develops a poetics of possession and exchange, of chance and contingency, and he does so in those moments that seem most to promise the practical virtues of craft labor.

For although readers have maintained that labor is everywhere throughout the poem, that labor is rarely, if ever, the moral craftsmanship extolled by Plutarch. Gay signals that we’re in the realm of fortune and contingency early on in Book III when he describes the peculiar danger of inadvertent walkers. One finds less a “landscape of labor” than a georgics of seafaring, as the walker is tossed along the London streets:

That Walker, who regardless of his Pace,
Turns oft’ to pore upon the Damsel’s Face,
From Side to Side by thrusting Elbows tost,
Shall strike his aking Breast against the Post;
Or Water, dash’d from fishy Stalls, shall stain
His hapless Coat with Spirits of scaly Rain.

³⁹ Plutarch, “The Life of Pericles,” in *Plutarch’s Lives: the Dryden Translation*, 2 vol., ed. Arthur Hugh Clough, trans. John Dryden (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 1:202.

⁴⁰ Plutarch, 202; also quoted in Paddy Bullard. Whereas Bullard reads Gay’s poem as aspiring to *praxis*, that is, the positive version of experience, I would argue that he also shows interest in the fortune.

But if unwarily he chance to stray
Where twirling Turnstiles intercept the Way,
The thwarting Passenger shall force them round,
And beat the Wretch half breathless to the Ground.
(III.101–110)

Perhaps one of the more surprising moments in the poem to “owe several hints to Swift,” the passage privileges fortune over virtue and contingency over craft. Elbows are “tost” like waves and water is “dash’d from fishy Stalls,” making the hazards of walking through the streets of London sound more like an account of shipwreck. The walker is moved by fortune, “if unwarily he chance to stray,” through his “vent’rous Steps” — here and throughout the poem (III.121). The text could even be glossed in terms of the walker’s habitual efforts to counter chance with skill: “Yet do not in thy hardy Skill confide,” he warns, “Nor rashly risque the Kennels spacious Stride” (III.171–72). By launching the poem into a world of contingency, seafaring, and chance, Gay depicts a rather apt setting for the poem’s ongoing evacuation of craft labor as a salient feature and condition of modern life.

These moments of risk, moreover, retain the connotations of fortune as possession and exchange established at least as early as Plutarch’s account. Take, for instance, the image of a pedestrian eating a common oyster: “First broke the oozy Oyster’s pearly coat, / And risqu’d the living Morsel down his Throat” (III.197–98). An odd usage of the transitive verb “to risk” — more often used to describe the endangerment of an object or bringing about the possibility of an unfortunate event — the syntax conflates fortune and consumption, risking and eating.⁴¹ Though presumably about the hazards of consuming a

⁴¹ The *OED* entry s.v. “risk, v” records no such usage for the transitive verb, indicating that this sense is more poetic than idiomatic. On risk in the eighteenth century, see Emily Nacol, *An Age of Risk: Politics and Economy in Early Modern Britain* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2016).

street oyster, the lines also highlight the precariousness of an incipient consumer society, one in which the goods of fortune are made inevitably suspect. Gay would indeed have had Plutarch in mind during the composition of the poem, as in comparing pedestrians browsing bookstalls to a “bee that on industrious Wing, / Collects the various Odours of the Spring,” he writes: “May Morals snatch’d from Plutarch’s tatter’d Page, / A mildew’d Bacon, or Stagyra’s Sage” (II.560–61). A neat depiction of the commodification of virtue, these lines rehearse a movement from the “moral good” to the “goods of fortune.” Virtue, in the sense of craft experience, is here congealed into a product “snatched” from Plutarch’s deteriorating page. And the puns on Francis Bacon and Aristotle only add to the effect, as their philosophy is reduced to rotting meat and herbs. Morals and philosophical precepts are most intelligible in Gay’s London as materialized, worn-out commodities.

This movement becomes something of a leitmotif across Gay’s poem. Eschewing the “proud Chariot” that he hopes will never be his “fate,” the walker maintains, “O rather give me sweet content on foot, / Wrapt in my virtue, and a good *Surtout!*” (II.587–90). The zeugma seems at first to do similar work to Pope’s of only a couple years earlier, “To stain her honour, or her new brocade”; that is, it marks an incompatibility between classical heroic values and those of a modern commercial society. As with “Plutarch’s tatter’d Page,” the speaker’s “virtue” slides into the language of the commodity. But Gay’s zeugma also makes allusion to Fortune’s gifts in Horace’s “Tyrrhenian Progeny of Kings [Tyrrhena regum progenies].” To protect himself against Fortune’s “cruel business” and “proud game,” Horace claims, “I return what she gave, wrap myself / In my virtue, and look for honest Poverty, / The bride that brings no

dowry.”⁴² Gay’s poem grounds itself in this struggle between fortune and virtue — a necessary, if ironized struggle to navigating the hazards of modern life. But as Gay’s walker makes clear, even more necessary is a good, if perhaps poorly made overcoat.

Gay’s title points to one of the most crucial sites for this ongoing tension between craft and contingency. Critics have been quick to notice the infrastructural resonance of “Trivia” — as a crossroads or a place where three roads intersect, *tri-via*, or that which is ordinary and of the streets — but they have yet to explore the significance of the goddess who could be found at those crossroads: Hecate or “Trivia,” the goddess of trickery and witchcraft.⁴³ Hecate is introduced in Hesiod’s *Theogony* not as the later trickier version of the Romans but as the benign goddess who rewards those who succeed at war and games: “The goddess helps / The men she wants to help, and eagerly / Brings victory and glorious fame to them.”⁴⁴ Still, one hears in Hesiod’s early encomium a hint of the risks of fortune and finance to come. Noting that she is “good for those / Who work the rude grey sea, and . . . the god who shakes / The earth with crashes,” Hesiod warns that one may “get great hauls from her. . .,”

if she wishes it,
But just as easily she takes away
All she has given, if she wants it so.
And she is helpful in the stables, too,

⁴² Horace, *Odes*, in *The Complete Odes and Epodes*, trans. David West (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1997), book III, ode 29, line 54. For a discussion of this passage and other allusions in Gay, see Dianne S. Ames, “Gay’s *Trivia* and the Art of Allusion,” *Studies in Philology* 75.2 (1978): 199–222.

⁴³ For a recent account of the poem through the lens of infrastructure, see Alff. Aside from Rogers’s crucial essay on Trivia as Hecate, cited above, Martin Battestin notes briefly that “the poem takes its title from the Roman name for Diana or Hecate, whose shrine was situated at the meeting of three cross roads,” but there remains much more work to be done on this crucial line of inquiry for the poem (“Menalcas’ Song: The Meaning of Art and Artifice in Gay’s Poetry,” *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 65.4 [1966]: 670).

⁴⁴ Hesiod, *Theogony*, ed. and trans. Dorothea Wender (New York: Penguin: 1973), pages 36–37. To explain this difference, Wender suggests that “Hesiod’s father, who came from Asia Minor,” may have “learned Hekate-worship in Miletus, an early centre of her cult. ‘If he did,’ says West, ‘It will be no coincidence that he gave one of his sons the name Perses, the name which Hesiod attributes to Hekate’s father’” (152–53n28).

Along with Hermes, to increase the stock.
The herds of cattle and of goats, and flocks
Of woolly sheep grow numerous, from few,
If she is willing, or grow small from great.⁴⁵

Distanced from the safe and careful labor that Hesiod would recommend in *Works and Days*, Hecate's rewards depend on her unpredictable desires. (The "small from great" indeed both anticipates and adds a further economic dimension to Virgil's later "si parva licet componere magnis.") She's ready to take away "all she has given, if she wants it so": these lines might just as well be used to describe the eighteenth century's Lady Credit, on Defoe's account "a coy Lass."⁴⁶ Or, in an earlier context, one might compare this moment to Fortune's "cruel business" in Horace's "Ode on the Tyrrhenian Progeny of Kings": "Fortune enjoys her cruel business and / persists in playing her proud game, / transferring her fickle honours, / favouring now me, now another."⁴⁷ Even at her most benevolent, Hecate is intrinsically tied to the perils of fortune and possession.

Labor does in fact enter into later depictions of the goddess, but strictly in the sense of trickiness and deceit. From Medea, who looks to the "three-formed goddess" and her "arts of magic" to help heal Jason's father in Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, to Tisiphone, who claims to Aeneas that Hecate "led me trembling thro' these dire Abodes: and taught the Tortures of th'avenging Gods," Trivia's peculiar arts and crafts are met with inherent suspicion.⁴⁸ This is certainly the sense meant by Thomas D'Urfrey when he describes

⁴⁵ Hesiod, 36–37.

⁴⁶ Defoe famously describes Lady Credit thus: "This is a coy Lass, and wonderful chary of her self; yet a most necessary, useful, industrious Creature: she has some Qualification so peculiar, and is so very nice in her Conduct, that a World of good People lose her Favour, before they well know her Name; others are courting her all their days to no purpose, and can never come into her books" ("Of Credit in Trade," 10 January 1706).

⁴⁷ Horace, *Odes*, III.29.49–52.

⁴⁸ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. A. D. Melville (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986), book VII, lines 170–80; Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. John Dryden, in *The Works of John Dryden*, 20 vol., ed. William Frost and Vinton A. Dearing (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1990), 6:VI.761–62. See also Horace, *Odes*, book III, ode

Trivia, or the “Goddess of Changelings, Fanaticks, State-Camelions, Flying-Squadrons, Menders and Reformers,” in a 1705 essay. “For,” D’Urfrey asks, “is she not always shifting it off for whatever comes next; running over the Changes and playing Tricks to elude and *deceive* it?” On D’Urfrey’s account, Trivia labors to be unpredictable: she “puts on a new Look for every new Posture of Affairs” and then, “grown weary even of constant Changing, she disappears and gets down to the Banks of *Eurota*,” until “tired also of her *present* self, she turns from *Diana* to *Proserpina*, and flies to the infernal Regions, there to converse with Folk of past and future Ages.”⁴⁹ Weary and tired even of change, Trivia plays a crucial role in the transformation of craft labor into deceit; she also helps tell the story of the interrelation of magic and the commodity under early capitalism.⁵⁰

I suggested earlier that Gay’s *Trivia* casts itself as a parodic version of such advisory notices as Woolf’s “Do not lean out the window.” It’s worth adding now that the central task of Gay’s advisory warnings is often to defamiliarize for modern readers the sorts of tricks and deceptions that pervade the London streets. For Gay’s pedestrian speaker, one must remain vigilant against a certain kind of craft in particular: that of the counterfeit and the street cheat. This particular anxiety stretches back to Horace’s

22, line 4, “To Diana, guardian of the Mountains,” which begins, “Guardian of mountains and woods, Virgin / who hear, when called three times by girls / in labour, and save them from death, / Three-formed goddess.”

⁴⁹ Thomas D’Urfey, *An Essay Towards the Theory of the Intelligible World* (London, 1705), 70. The more oft-cited connection to the roads was also well known at the time: “*Hecate* was likewise the *Moon*; properly called . . . Three Ways. Hence in *Varro Diana* is called *Trivia*, because in *Grecian Towns*, she was set in a way where three Ways met?” (Herbert of Sherbury, Edward Herbert, Baron, *The Antient Religion of the Gentiles* [London, 1705], 63).

⁵⁰ A 1709 translation of Virgil even includes Trivia as one of the Goddesses invoked at the beginning of Book I of *The Georgics*: “Tho’ dreaming *Greeks Elysian* Fields admire, / And *Trivia* slights her Mothers kind desire” (*The Works of Virgil, Translated into English Verse. By the Right Honourable Richard late Earl of Lauderdale*. [London, 1709], book I, lines 36–37).

cheating beggar, who “moans that his trunk has been broken open and his money stolen.”⁵¹ Horace writes that the beggar is “like the girl with her well-known tricks, who is always lamenting / The theft of a necklace or anklet, until in the end, when she’s suffered / A real loss and is really upset, no one believes her.”⁵² The analogy to “the girl with her well-known tricks” would indeed provide a crucial starting point for Gay’s more modern advisory notices in *Trivia*. In describing a “Beggar’s Brat,” who “through various Risques in Years improv’d,” for instance, Gay invokes the language of skill and expertise: “His Infant Tongue soon learnt the canting Art / Knew all the pray’rs and Whines to touch the Heart” (II.141–44). As the language of hypocrisy and fashion, the “canting Art” offers a useful way to mark the loss and evacuation of skill in the period.⁵³ But also as the jargon or argot of a group, here that of beggars, it echoes Swift’s concern about the uneven distribution of expertise within new modes of finance. Across a wide variety of social contexts, the language of craft was placed increasingly under suspicion amid the rise and fall of georgic poetry.

Trivia’s landscape of labor slides continually toward these arts of deception. Gay devalues craft labor as deceit, and the dexterity that had once been reserved for virtuous craft labor is instead applied to the work of pickpockets and other such “subtil artists”: “Dext’rous he scapes the coach with nimble Bounds, / While ev’ry honest tongue *Stop Thief* resounds.” The narrator goes on to explicitly lament the moral degradation of craft — “Ill-fated Boy! / Why did not honest Work thy Youth employ?” — as the young pickpocket is “Seiz’d by rough Hands,” “dragg’d amid the Rout, / And stretch’d beneath

⁵¹ Horace, *Epistles I*, in *Satires and Epistles*, trans. Niall Rudd (London: Penguin, 2005), 17.50–62. See Rogers, 21.

⁵² Horace, *Epistles I*, 17.55–57.

⁵³ On the “art of canting” in both Swift and Gay, see Bullard, 617–19, 632.

the Pump's incessant Spout: / Or plung'd in miry Ponds, he gasping lies, / Mud choaks his Mouth, and plaisters o'er his Eyes" (III.67–76). We saw earlier how contemporary journals like *The Craftsman* aimed to expose moneyed politics and political corruption as "craft," but here Gay ambivalently shifts focus toward the disenfranchised. Whereas later works like Henry Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* (1743) and Gay's own *Beggar's Opera* (1728) took street crime as a figure for Walpolean corruption — the sort of political critique featured in chapter two, herein — Gay's *Trivia* sets its emphasis more squarely on the degradation of craft within the modern streetscape. In one of the few moments of the poem when "labour" is explicitly stated, Gay goes on to describe the dangers of female ballad singers as sirens: "Let not the Ballad-Singer's shrilling Strain," he warns, "Amid the Swarm thy list'ning Ear detain: / Guard well thy Pocket; for these Syrens stand, / To aid the Labours of the diving Hand; / Confed'rate in the cheat, they draw the Throng, / And Cambrick Handkerchiefs reward the Song" (III.77–82). In narrating the fall of craft and the rise of the "cheat," Gay turns repeatedly to women and to London's poor for his examples. This often reads as a familiar displacement of political and economic anxieties onto the disenfranchised. In relation to Gay's re-envisioning of his own poetic art as an uncrafted "torrent of words," it's not always clear on which side of the divide he falls.

The work of the "subtil Artist" who dives "with practis'd Slight, / And unfelt Fingers make thy Pocket light," might also be glossed as a magic trick. And Gay's poem often turns to street magic and games of chance to narrate the shift from craft to craftiness. In so doing, he draws analogies to Hecate's tricks as well as to the work of fortune and finance: "Who can the various City Frauds recite, / With all the petty Rapines

of the Night? / Who now the Guinea-Dropper's Bait regards, / Trick'd by the Sharper's Dice, or Juggler's Cards?" (III.247–50).⁵⁴ We saw in the previous chapter how Swift's poems critique the way in which skilled and deliberate speculative malfeasance is displaced onto the "madness of the people" — a diagnosis that pervades criticism by pointing to fortune and irrationality as causes for the South Sea Crash. Gay's dexterous sleights of hand provide further evidence for Swift's resistance to such a claim; "sleight of hand" might well be used to describe Dryden and Pope's formal strategies, as well as the early invisible mechanisms of capital.

Magic offers an especially apt figure for this shift. Initially treated as a craft or useful trade, magic (like other such handicrafts) devolves in Gay's poem into the realm of suspicion.⁵⁵ Continuing his list of "Misfortunes that disgrace the Clown" (III.285), Gay's narrator thus condemns "the Jugler's Feats" and remains careful not to "try the Thimble's Cheats" (III.289–90) — the latter for which Gay includes a footnote in the original edition: "A Cheat, commonly practic'd in the Streets, with three Thimbles and a little Ball" (page 185). Gay's street cheat in fact describes what may be one of the oldest magic tricks.⁵⁶ The common trick is depicted on the bottom left of Hogarth's *Southwark Fair* (1733–34), in which two men argue over which cup would have been hiding the

⁵⁴ On the relation between games, magic, and finance, see Jesse Molesworth, *Chance and the Eighteenth-Century Novel: Realism, Probability, Magic* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010).

⁵⁵ See Owen Davies, *Popular Magic: Cunning-folk in English History* (New York: Continuum, 2007). Thomas Aquinas repeatedly refers to magic as an "art" or as "the magic arts": "Now, the aforesaid arts do not use characters or figures as produced by heavenly bodies, in fact they are produced by man in the practice of the art. . . . Hence it is clear that these arts which employ figures in order to produce certain effects, derive their efficacy, not from something that acts by nature, but from some intellectual substance that acts by intelligence" (*Summa contra gentiles*, in *Witchcraft in Europe, 400–1700: A Documentary History*, ed. Alan Charles Kors and Edward Peters [Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2001], 94).

⁵⁶ See Milbourne Christopher and Maurine Christopher, *The Illustrated History of Magic Updated Edition* (Running Press, 2005).

ball.⁵⁷ Gay's choice of a thimble for the cup, however, is much less common in history.

In a poem where women's labor is continually rendered as a cheat, the choice of sewing implement seems especially fit. Not to mention the thimble's diminutive size: here and throughout the poem women's labor is both miniaturized and rendered fraudulent.

We've already met with one version of magic in Virgil's *Georgics*: Proteus, "the wily Wizard," whom Cyrene tells Aristaeus to catch so that "all his Frauds will vanish into Wind."⁵⁸ But whereas in Virgil the Aristaeus digression offers an exception to the more "beneficial art[s]" for which the poem is known, Gay makes a point of showing that in his version of London such frauds are closer to the rule (*Trivia*, II.152). The urban georgic Cyrene, "With wither'd Turnip Tops her Temples crown'd" (II.196), thus recommends precisely the opposite to a young orphan in Gay's inverted version of the episode: "Go thrive. At some frequented Corner stand, / This Brush I give thee, grasp it in thy Hand, / Temper the Soot within this Vase of Oil, / And let the little Tripod aid thy Toil" (II.203–206). In a poem filled with cheats and arts of deception, this digression offers instead a brief picture of "honest work."⁵⁹ Near the section entitled "How to know a Whore," Gay further adds to the inversion by warning against "their Wiles and subtil

⁵⁷ Ronald Paulson has noted that the magician depicted is likely Isaac Fawkes and suggests that Hogarth may be comparing Fawkes's sleights of hand to those behind the South Sea Bubble. See Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth's Graphic Works* (London: Print Room, 1989) and Paulson, *The "modern moral subject," in Hogarth*, 3 vol., (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1991). The topic of magic and witchcraft indeed lent itself to a great deal of visual satire in the long eighteenth century: "As had Hogarth before them, both Thomas Rowlandson and James Gillray around the turn of the nineteenth century adapted some of the traditional pictorial elements to satirize elements of the British government as well as popular beliefs, as in Gillray's *Weird Sisters of 1791*" (Alan Charles Kors and Edward Peters, introduction to *Witchcraft in Europe, 400–1700: A Documentary History*, ed. Kors and Peters [Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2001], 40).

⁵⁸ Dryden, *The Georgics*, in *The Works of John Dryden*, 5:book IV, lines 571, 575.

⁵⁹ The Turnip Goddess's odd imperative, "Go thrive," only adds to the sense of precariousness that runs throughout the poem, as "thrive" and "thrift," having the early modern sense of "prosperity, success, good luck, . . . fortune (good or bad); luck," share the same root (*OED* s.v. "thrift, *n.*," 1). Book IV of Virgil's *Georgics* is also often translated as an account of "industry of thrifty bees." See for instance Virgil, *Eclogue, Georgics Aeneid*, trans. H. R. Fairclough (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1916).

Arts / To lure the Stranger's unsuspecting hearts" (III.263–64). The "wily wizard" of Virgil's original is here transformed into the "wiles" of sex work, and the pedestrian's "Virtue" is meant to guard him from "The Harlot's guileful Paths" (III.261): "Her Fan will pat thy Cheek," he warns, "these Snares disdain, / Nor gaze behind thee, when she turns again" (III.283–84).⁶⁰

The displacement of fraud and craftiness onto women's labor might well be taken as the poem's central move. Gay rewrites the Ariadne myth as a cautionary tale against placing one's trust in "a female Guide":

Thus hardy *Theseus*, with intrepid Feet,
Travers'd the dang'rous Labyrinth of *Crete*;
But still the wandring Passes forc'd his Stay,
Till *Ariadne's* Clue unwinds the Way.
But do not thou, like that bold Chief, confide
Thy ventrous Footsteps to a female Guide;
She'll lead thee, with delusive Smiles along,
Dive in thy Fob, and drop thee in the Throng.
(III.73–90)

Gay's vignette evinces something like a miniature version of the descent from craft into craftiness. Often described as a weaving Goddess, Ariadne is here displaced from domestic arts and crafts to the arts of deception. Women, on this account of social history, are left only with the cheat — diving on thy fob and left with delusive smiles. Just as the thimble becomes simply an empty receptacle for sleight of hand in Gay's account of the earliest magic trick above, here again we see the fall of craft labor. From Ariadne's thread, to the siren ballad singers, to the women of Katherine street, or the "pleas'd Sempstresses" who "the *Lock's* fam'd *Rape* unfold" (II.551–64), Gay's poem

⁶⁰ The section directly preceding "How to know a Whore" is titled "An Admonition to Virtue." Here "virtue" can be taken to mean the more useful art of carefully walking the streets of London.

rehearses and reiterates a movement in which women's labor slides into commodification and deceit.

This narrative, in which the ills of early capitalism are transferred onto the world of women's labor, in which domestic labor and sex work are effortlessly tied to craftiness and deception, might sound today like something of a commonplace. In this respect, Gay's poem helps to historicize what Sianne Ngai has recently described as the theory of the gimmick, or "labor-saving device." Ngai looks to "marvelous devices" of the sixteenth century, such as a series of machines imitating Medea's spells and lightning storms to represent the story of Jason, as "objects of admiration only, unmixed with suspicion or contempt." For Ngai, such marvels serve as the positive precursor to the more ambivalent twentieth- and twenty-first-century iterations of the gimmick as "both a wonder *and* a trick."⁶¹ I argue that the magic of "trivia" in the Enlightenment offers an important and ambivalent stop along the way. (In this, the Medea example is perhaps especially apt.) Gay's own tricky goddess of witchcraft and the streets teaches us that the capitalist narrative in which "the feminization of labor and the becoming contingent of labor . . . structurally coincide," is a very old story, indeed.⁶² Ngai takes as her central example the "productivity-enhancing gimmick" of Helen DeWitt's *Lightning Rods*, that is, "a woman embedded in a machine embedded in a sex service embedded in a temp agency."⁶³ I've suggested that such an interrelation between cheap, casualized labor and sex work stretches back at least to Gay as an expression of the anxieties over early capital

⁶¹ Sianne Ngai, "Theory of the Gimmick," *Critical Inquiry* 43 (2017): 469. For the sixteenth-century example, Ngai refers to Giorgio Agamben, *The Man without Content*, trans. Georgia Albert (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1999), 14.

⁶² Ngai, 500.

⁶³ Ngai, 498.

and the loss and commodification of craftsmanship.⁶⁴ For the remainder of this chapter, I will track this particular early capitalist ambivalence, this odd mixture of satire and lament, across Gay's poem and those of his industrial georgic successors.

Gay's satire on the rise of a consumer society often drifts into the realm of elegy. The speaker for instance relates "In Elegaic Lay" an "episode of the Great Frost," "When silent Ev'ning closes up the Flow'rs; / Lulling, as falling Water's hollow noise; / Indulging Grief, like *Philomela's* Voice" (II.356–80). This explicit turn to elegy is accompanied by an account of labors lost: "The Sempstress speeds to 'Change with red-tipt Nose," he writes, "The *Belgian* Stove beneath her Footstool glows, / In half-whipt Muslin Needles useless lye, / And Shuttle-cocks across the counter fly" (II.337–42). Gay further complicates the underlying notion of trivia in the poem through his mock elegy of labor.⁶⁵ In a stanza to which the headnote is attached "Precepts vulgarly known," he worries over his own relationship to "trivial things": "Yet let me not descend to trivial song, / Nor vulgar Circumstance my Verse prolong; / Why should I teach the Maid when

⁶⁴ On casualized women's labor in the eighteenth century, see Mary Collier, "The Woman's Labor," in *The Thresher's Labour, The Woman's Labour*, ed. E. P. Thompson (London: The Merlin Press, 1989). In response to Duck's sexist depiction of "prattling Females" in *The Thresher's Labour* (in *The Thresher's Labour, The Woman's Labour*, line 164), Collier describes the gathering, gleaning, washing, charring, and other domestic labors that make up her work day, only to find that "Six-Pence or Eight-Pence pays off at last" (line 199). Where Collier describes her own precarious search for casual work in 1739, Mary Wollstonecraft would later take up the language of women's casualized labor to describe the "disorderly" state of women's education as a "negligent kind of guess-work": "Led by their dependent situation and domestic employments more into society, what they learn is rather by snatches" (*A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, ed. Miriam Brody [New York: Penguin, 2004], 32–33). On the eighteenth-century laboring poets, see John Goodridge, *Rural Life in Eighteenth-Century English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995); Donna Landry, *The Muses of Resistance: Laboring-Class Women's Poetry in Britain, 1739–1796* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990); and William J. Christmas, *The Lab'ring Muses: Work, Writing, and the Social Order in English Plebeian Poetry, 1730–1830* (Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 2001).

⁶⁵ On the mode of elegy as a walking poem see Amanda Elizabeth Zecca, "Undersongs: Left Elegies and the Politics of Community, 1940–1965," (PhD Diss., Johns Hopkins University, August 2017), 96. Zecca looks to the German tradition, placing Schiller's "melancholy hike" up a mountain in a genealogy with twentieth-century American iterations of the mode (78). This often overlooked relation between walking and mourning, I suggest, offers one important lens through which to read Gay's occasionally elegiac poem on the art of walking the streets of London.

Torrents pour, / Her Head to shelter from the sudden show'r?" (II.301–4). The worry appears straightforward: the trifle and the everyday seem little to warrant extended poetic treatment. But the “descent” of Gay’s lines also makes allusion to *Georgics* IV. Not merely a verb for the bathos of modern commercial experience, it also signals Orpheus’s descent into the underworld, one of the more melancholy moments of Virgil’s middle style.⁶⁶ Even Hecate retains such origins of mourning and descent as the figure who inquires to Demeter in *The Homeric Hymns* “What god above or mortal stole Persephone / And filled your heart with grief?”⁶⁷ In Gay’s hands, the counterfeit tells something like the story of the fall of craft labor in poetry — a favorite image for the Scriblerians. Tracing the descent of craft and poetry through the elegiac mode, Gay also marks a crucial incompatibility between the new commercial society and georgic heightening. In these moments of elegy, Gay repeatedly — and only a little ironically — laments the loss of an almost bygone era of workmanship.

Trivia anticipates georgic’s outmodedness by tracking the rise of industry and consumerism alongside the fall of craftsmanship. One notorious inheritor of the tradition is John Dyer’s *The Fleece*, which inspired Johnson’s claim about georgic: “The subject, Sir, cannot be made poetical. How can a man write poetically of serges and druggets?”⁶⁸ Modern critics have tended to agree. The commercial incompatibility of Gay’s poem becomes even more glaring as Dyer celebrates the British wool trade in high Miltonic

⁶⁶ On the Orpheus episode in Virgil, Kevis Goodman writes, “The *Georgics*, then, represent Orpheus’s mourning as labor within a spectrum of labors joining cultivation to exhumation” (*Georgic Modernity and British Romanticism: Poetry and the Mediation of History* [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004], 114).

⁶⁷ Homer, “To Demeter,” *Homeric Hymns*, trans. Sarah Ruden, ed. Sheila Murnaghan (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2005), lines 55–56. As Battestin notes briefly, *Trivia* is “goddess both of virgin forests and of the underworld” (670).

⁶⁸ Boswell, 506.

iambus. Described by Dwight L. Durling as the eighteenth-century equivalent to “an epic of the motor age,” *The Fleece* fails to accommodate industrial modernity to Virgil’s original georgic form.⁶⁹ “Industry,” announces Dyer, “dignifies the artist, lifts the swain, / and straw cottage to a palace turns.”⁷⁰ But his sublime account of industry just as soon descends into bathos. Comparing the “scene / Of hurrying Carthage, when the Trojan chief / First view’d her growing turrets,” he writes: “So appear / Th’increasing walls of busy Manchester, / Sheffield, and Birmingham, whose redd’ning fields / Rise and enlarge their suburbs.”⁷¹ Dyer’s lack of irony, his forced yet sincere epic similes, and the bathetic shift from the scene of Carthage to the sprawling English suburbs would seem to corroborate the critical consensus. In the move from Pope and Dryden’s formal craft georgics to Gay’s failed attempt to put industrial processes into verse, what appears to have changed is the ability to analogize poetry to the labor in question. As Dyer describes the rapidly growing and mechanizing wool trade, the subject increasingly resists being “made poetical.”

Johnson’s terms of critique read somewhat oddly against the background of georgic’s reception, however. For part of the point of georgic is that even the meanest of subjects can be made poetical. Addison thus famously praises Virgil for “deliver[ing] the meanest of his precepts with a kind of grandeur [and] break[ing] the clods and toss[ing] the dung about with an air of gracefulness.”⁷² In many ways, *The Fleece* might read as a logical conclusion to the story being told by Gay’s *Trivia*. We saw in this project’s

⁶⁹ Dwight L. Durling, *Georgic Tradition in English Poetry* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1935), 74.

⁷⁰ John Dyer, *The Fleece*, ed. John Goodridge and Juan Christian Pellicer (Cheltenham: The Cyder Press, 2007), book III, lines 332–34.

⁷¹ Dyer, *The Fleece*, book III, lines 335–40.

⁷² Joseph Addison, *An Essay on the Georgics*, in *The Works of John Dryden*, 5:page 151.

introduction how Dyer admonishes against the 1719 and 1739 weaver's riots: "Nor hence, ye nymphs, let anger cloud your brows; / The more is wrought, the more is still requir'd."⁷³ Where Gay had earlier warned of the beggar's art of canting, Dyer here eulogizes the workhouse as a solution to the problem of craftiness. Addressing still his weaver nymphs, he goes on: "Nor, should the careful State, severely kind, / In ev'ry province, to the house of toil / Compel the vagrant, and each implement / Of ruder art, the comb, the card, the wheel, / teach their unwilling hands, nor yet complain."⁷⁴ A neat account of the industrialization of women's labor, the passage also claims to resolve the London street cheat with his poem's version of economic "improvement." Dyer's unpoetical georgic motto might well sound something like, "go thrive!"

Concerns over fraud and the counterfeit hover over the georgic poetry the British Enlightenment. From Dryden's description of Shaftesbury as a debased medal to Swift's condemnation of the skilled agents behind the South Sea Crisis, craft labor and malfeasance begin to look like a logical pair. This concern over craft and quality culminates in the last so-called true georgic, Richard Jago's *Edge-Hill*. The poem indeed begins with an image of georgic counterfeit, the ha-ha "Or mould'ring Wall, well taught to counterfeit," which "crown[s] with graceful Pomp the shaggy Hill."⁷⁵ A well-known trompe l'oeil of landscape design, the ha-ha provides an apt image to introduce Jago's panegyric to the industrial sector of Birmingham, which was notorious for its counterfeit metal work.⁷⁶ At the same time, and much like in Gay, the poem brings georgic toil to the

⁷³ Dyer, III.85–86.

⁷⁴ Dyer, III.91–95.

⁷⁵ Richard Jago, *Edge-Hill; or, The Rural Prospect Delineated and Moralized* (London, 1767), book I, lines 32, 34.

⁷⁶ See Crawford, 138–65 for her excellent account of Jago's poem against a background of the counterfeit Birmingham toy industry. For Crawford, *Edge-Hill* exemplifies a poetics of simulation through "the strategic use of georgic misinformation" (134).

foreground by describing the “lab’ring Sight” and “painful Drudgery of Words.”⁷⁷ This is no longer the formal craftsmanship that Dryden and Pope espoused, but a labor that comes to the surface as painful, imperfect content. Jago seems painfully aware of georgic’s impending outmodedness. After a panegyric to Shakespeare, “Prodigy of Nature’s genuine Growth,” he writes: “Alas! How languid is the labour’d song, / the slow result of Rules, and tortur’d Sense, / Compared with Thine! Thy animated thought, / And glowing Phrase! Which Art in vain essays, / And Schools can never teach.”⁷⁸ How, these poets seem to ask, can the georgic precept survive the rise of commercial industry? What is georgic without careful craft labor? For each of these georgic poets, the counter-movements of artisanship and industry leave only an imperfect and labored remainder, a poetry that risks seeming at once counterfeit and derivative.

For Jago, this worry extends to politics as well as to the commercial society. “Oh! May no sons of Fraud,” he writes toward the end of his poem, “Usurp thy Name, to veil their dark Designs / Of vile Ambition, or licentious Rage!”⁷⁹ He then goes on to recount a narrative of the dissimulation of Cromwell during the Civil War: “There, of Feature harsh, / And with dissembled Haste, and feign’d Concern / For luckless Absence in the glorious Toil, / Involuntary, crafty *CROMWELL came. / Not such in After-times! When prouder Aims, / And more exalted Rank, his Courage rais’d; / and shew’d him foremost, as in deep Design / And high Ambition, first in Danger too.”⁸⁰ Jago’s note to the phrase “Crafty Cromwell” recounts a moment when “Oliver Cromwell was quartered with a Troop of Horse in a neighboring Village, and came not into the Engagement,

⁷⁷ Jago, I.57, 59.

⁷⁸ Jago, I.296, 317–21.

⁷⁹ Jago, IV.412–14.

⁸⁰ Jago, IV.550–57.

pretending that he could not find the way into the Field of battle.”⁸¹ Within the story of this dissertation, it feels appropriate that the Augustan georgic tradition would end with such an explicit account of “craftiness.” The “deep design” indeed echoes Swift’s worry over “the wily shafts of state, of deep design and politicks” in my previous chapter. Inasmuch as individual craft labor is lost, it also appears repeatedly to be replaced with something like a trick.

Craftiness and miniaturization repeatedly come together within this genealogy of the georgic counterfeit. Describing the “smoky Arts” in Book II, Jago complains: “Thus Innocence, / In human Things, by wily Fraud ensar’d, / Oft helpless falls, while the bold Plund’rer ’scapes” (II.120–22). This world of fraud extends out to the Midlands in Book III, where the Muse describes “the promis’d Schools of wise Artificers / In Brass, and Iron” and then runs “o’er thy furrow’d Pavement, Bremicham!”⁸² Bremicham, another name for Birmingham, offers an appropriate setting for late Augustan georgic, as Brummagem — the local name for the city — was also synonymous with the cheap and even counterfeit goods that were produced through mass-industrial processes there.⁸³ By looking to the Birmingham Toy industry, Jago brings fraud and littleness together as a sign of georgic’s outmodedness: “But how shall I recount / The thronging Merchandise? From gaudy Signs, / The litter’d Counter, and the Shew-glass trim, / Seals, Rings, ’Twees, Bodkins, crowd into my Verse, / *Too scanty to contain their num’rous Tribes.”⁸⁴

⁸¹ Jago, page 159.

⁸² Jago, III.297–99.

⁸³ See Crawford, 157–65. Crawford describes this metal industry as “Birmingham trickery,” an apt phrase for the purposes of this chapter (161).

⁸⁴ Jago, III.557–62.

I have argued that the georgic works of Gay, Dyer, and Jago offer a mixture of irony and elegy over the loss of earlier modes of craft labor — more intentional in some than in others. Turning now to art of accident in the history of the novel, I will suggest the privileging of depleted modes of agency as one possible response to this fall. Refusing to treat craft as a privileged mode of moral and artistic action, Burney inaugurates a tradition of the novel that deliberately embraces contingency.

Coda: Frances Burney and the Art of Accident

It has often been taken as a matter of course that art be privileged over accident in the history of the novel. Henry Fielding is at pains to separate the two in his famous account of the “Art of Life” at the beginning of *Amelia*: “Life,” he writes, “may as properly be called an art as any other; and the great incidents in it are no more to be considered as mere accidents, than the several members of a fine statue, or a noble poem.”¹ Positioning accident as a moral failing on the part of novelist and character alike, Fielding casts life as a matter of unmitigated responsibility, an art to be improved upon with careful and deliberate practice — from the smallest incident to the greatest, and seemingly unavoidable, catastrophe. This logic persists well into our contemporary moment, not least with James Wood’s controversial diagnosis of so-called hysterical realism. A “perpetual-motion machine that appears to have been embarrassed into velocity,” the postmodern novel runs counter to the ideal of deliberate action by exchanging feeling for scale, character for network, verisimilitude for theatricality.² Most lamentable in these busy, ambitious novels is what Wood describes as a failure to create “fully human” characters. The “lack is the human,” he writes in a sentiment that becomes a key refrain of the essay: coincidences proliferate and information abounds, but we never really get to feel for or with the characters.³ In matters of “moral seriousness” as well as narrative probability, the accident has appeared to work directly against the successful work of art.⁴

¹ Henry Fielding, *Amelia*, ed. David Blewett (New York: Penguin, 1987), 14.

² James Wood, *The Irresponsible Self: On Laughter and the Novel* (New York: Picador, 2005), 178.

³ Wood, 182.

⁴ Wood, 187.

Recent criticism in the eighteenth century has provided one important departure from this system of values. As has become increasingly apparent in studies of the period's long prose fiction, what Wood might disparagingly name a "hot plot" — that is, a sequence of events that obscures human character — is often found to have more agency and liveliness than the characters it propels.⁵ Jesse Molesworth has recently suggested as much in his call for a reading practice that focuses on plot rather than on the verisimilitude of character and setting.⁶ Such work has helped to shift focus from psychological interiority and individual character to theories of action, demonstrating how concepts like agency, intention, and responsibility were thought to reach beyond individual personhood into the external world. Responding to Ian Watt's foundational reading of the novel as a genre of liberal individualism, critics have demonstrated how this turn from character to plot helps us to see people as "matter in motion," as Sandra Macpherson puts it, a proposition that if "quite literally dehumanizing . . . is not, therefore, inhumane."⁷ Increasingly, the eighteenth-century novel is seen as a genre in which the propulsion of flat characters is less an artistic failure than a formal and ethical imperative.

This coda traces a paradox of agency that developed in the eighteenth century but persists in the big social novels of our moment. Unlike the *Art of Poetry* or *The Art of Ingeniously Tormenting* (1753), to which Frances Burney alludes in both *Cecilia* and *The Wanderer*, the *Art of Accident* places one's will in tension with the most unplanned of

⁵ Wood, 181.

⁶ Jesse Molesworth, *Chance and the Eighteenth-Century Novel: Realism, Probability, Magic* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010), 2.

⁷ Sandra Macpherson, *Harm's Way: Tragic Responsibility and the Novel Form* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2010), 23.

events; it projects improvable, individual skill onto that which by definition is contingent. Over a long history of philosophy and criticism, “accident” has held diverse definitions from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, in which it is set against “essence” to denote those qualities peripheral to any object or being, to modern understandings of the word as a chance occurrence or unexpected event.⁸ What these notions share is a diminished sense of individual control over objects and encounters: accidental qualities can be separated out from the most basic understandings of a being or object’s substance, while accidental events thwart even the best of one’s intentions. In each case, accident remains antithetical to the category of “art,” in the early eighteenth-century sense of “skill or craft,” as a matter of willful conduct. My line of argument is thus less interested in the dehumanizing ethics that postmodern and Enlightenment fictions may very well share than it is in investigating modes of action that do not rely on “art” in this sense of intentional and repeatable skill as the standard for human character. In turning to the surprising intersection between art and accident, I suggest that the “convincing possibilities” postmodern novels are said to lack need not rely on a stable relation between act and intent — that one can feel with and for a character without needing to have a consistent, or “probable,” explanation for her actions.⁹

How might the history of the novel look if it didn’t privilege “art” in thinking about realist character, if a recourse to accident didn’t necessarily imply that characters were objects in motion? What might narrative ethics look like if we were less inclined to

⁸ See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, ed. and trans. Hugh Lawson-Tancred (New York: Penguin, 2004), 129a–149a.

⁹ Claiming that the postmodern novel “def[ies] the laws of persuasion,” Wood writes: “This is what Aristotle means when he says that in storytelling ‘a convincing possibility’ (a man levitating, say) is always preferable to ‘an unconvincing possibility’ (say, the possibility that a fundamentalist group in London would continue to call itself KEVIN)” (181).

treat accident as a moral and artistic lapse than as part of the deliberate work of its author, as part of what makes us human? I take Burney's long works of fiction as my case study because although her novels express a clear interest in accidents and webs of relations, they continue to be read as narratives of individual conduct, that is, as works of "art."¹⁰ Crucial as such studies have been to Burney's prominence within the history of the novel, they have tended to take for granted an idea of uninterrupted agency in both aspiring women and designing men. When it comes to questions of action, the logic of conduct seems rather straightforward, even predictable: one learns what is proper, whether through manuals or through trial and error, and acts accordingly. Simple enough — and yet things never quite seem to go as planned, even where Burney's characters' most isolated actions are concerned. Burney asks that we consider the ethics of a world run by chance when her heroines attempt to act on an intention (to flee a fireworks display or a predatory young officer, for instance, or to give most of an inheritance to charity) only to be met with what Burney often refers to as "accident": Evelina is stopped and taken up by a group of prostitutes in St. James's Park while Lord Orville just happens to be walking by; Cecilia's charitable projects are hampered by the unfortunate confluence of profligacy, avarice, and pride in her three assigned guardians. These events leave one wondering to what extent, if at all, Burney's heroines' misfortunes can be ascribed to individual will.

¹⁰ On various modes of "conduct" in Burney, see Joyce Hemlow, *The History of Fanny Burney* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 91; Patricia Meyer Spacks, "Dynamics of Fear: Fanny Burney," in *Modern Essays on Eighteenth-Century Literature*, ed. Leopold Damrosch Jr. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), 459; Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670–1820* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1994), 205; Julie Park, *The Self & It* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2010), 134.

The logic of conduct implies a clear path from intention to action. The perils of applying such a notion to Burney's fiction become clear when one critic argues that "despite the best will in the world," Burney's protagonists "get themselves entrapped in financial crises from which they cannot extricate themselves"; this in turn helps to "further the view that women are not fully qualified to participate in the system of needs that constitutes civil society — that they want the protection of the husband. That is, they are not destined to be 'economic men,' but rather to be 'domestic women.'"¹¹ The oscillating account of agency — in which the "best will in the world" cedes to financial crisis, in which qualifications cede to destiny — offers a telling example of this problem in Burney criticism. In these moments a logic that applies skill to the unpredictable world of finance only propagates already entrenched narratives of crafty men and artless women. Fascinated by the effects of financial capitalism on one's domestic life — most notably through the pun of the "marriage market" — Burney was especially attuned to the effects of politico-economic change on the most ordinary of actions.¹² But there's more at stake in Burney's peculiar depiction of accident than the reification of character that the marriage market has come to signify in eighteenth-century criticism. Experimenting with those postures that hover somewhere between compulsion and purposiveness, Burney demonstrates that even the unlikeliest actions, those moments

¹¹ James Thompson, *Models of Value: Eighteenth-Century Political Economy and the Novel* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1996), 158–59.

¹² Lynch writes, "Few readers would dispute that Burney's marriage plots unfold in a marriage *market*: this is the manifest, not the latent, meaning of *Evelina* and the novels succeeding it" (Deidre Shauna Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture and the Business of Inner Meaning* [Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998], 167).

when plot appears to overtake characterological intention, are not so much dehumanizing as they are all too human.¹³

Fielding had good reason to be suspicious of any argument relying on “mere accidents” to explain the ways of the world. A staunch critic of Prime Minister Robert Walpole, Fielding deploys the Machiavellian poles of *virtù* and *fortuna* to argue against the use of fortune as an alibi for immoral behavior, whether in the sphere of politics or in the context of one’s imperfect domestic life. As I noted above, J. G. A. Pocock has influentially demonstrated how the British Republican ideal of “civic humanism” was premised on precisely such terms: the individual’s failure to skillfully “participat[e] in political decision,” Pocock claims, could directly result in “the failure of the republic [and] the triumph of Fortune.”¹⁴ For many writers Walpole’s moneyed politics perfectly exemplified this triumph of fortune over skill, the corrupt political world that had become ruled by chance. On this point Fielding becomes rather insistent. In a critique of the notion that “no human institution is capable of consummate perfection,” his narrator proclaims, “this appears to me to be no less an absurdity, than to say of a machine that it is excellently made, tho’ incapable of performing its functions.”¹⁵ For Fielding, a well-regulated state leaves nothing to chance; it epitomizes the ideal republican virtue of a politics organized exclusively by skill.

¹³ This is to restore the Nietzschean language in the title of Wood’s original article in the *New Republic*, “Human, All too Inhuman.”

¹⁴ J. G. A. Pocock, “Civic Humanism and Its Role in Anglo-American Thought,” in *Politics, Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1989), 86.

¹⁵ Fielding, *Amelia*, 14, 15.

One sees the effects of this argument quite clearly in the realm of novelistic character. For, as I noted in the introduction to this project, it is often those most calculating or villainous characters who are most willing to cede control. We might think of *Amelia*'s Captain Booth, who takes fortune and the ruling passion as unavoidable causes for his inexcusable behavior, or of Burney's conniving Mr. Monckton, who plots assiduously against Cecilia throughout the novel yet maintains that he "finds the necessity of accommodating himself to such customs as are already received, and of pursuing quietly the track that is already marked out."¹⁶ Fiction of the eighteenth century is haunted by these figures who take self-interest as a matter of compulsion. Accident thus doubles as an unlikely plot point and an unconvincing alibi for immorality.

As a general rule, then, the eighteenth-century novel might be said to have very little patience for bad faith. The critical bias toward character and conduct is, in this respect, unsurprising. What is surprising is the central role that accident comes to play in Fielding's narratives and in the rise of the novel more generally. If accident is antithetical to the art of fiction and the art of politics, then why, for instance, does the word "accident" occur in *Tom Jones* over one-hundred times? What would at first seem a glaring contradiction on Fielding's part, in fact, provides a foundation for his narrative ethics, which uses accident to build rather than to interfere with character. The novel described by Coleridge as having a "perfect plot" is replete with unlikely incidents — a fact for which Fielding's narrator is at pains to apologize.¹⁷ He begins one of his

¹⁶ Frances Burney, *Cecilia, Or Memoirs of an Heiress*, ed. Peter Sabor and Margaret Anne Doody (New York: Oxford, 2008), 14. Hereafter cited parenthetically by page number and abbreviated *C*. As David Blewett writes in the introduction to *Amelia*, "Booth is an intellectual drifter who has taken up the popular notion of the predominant passion and uses it to excuse his own lapses of behavior" (xii).

¹⁷ Henry Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling*, ed. John Bender and Simon Stern (New York: Oxford, 1996), 339.

prefatory design chapters by ascribing narrative probability to the “human agents” of the novel rather than to the many coincidences of the plot. It matters much less for Fielding that any one event should exist within the realm of probability than that the actions within a novel “should be likely for the very actors and characters themselves to have performed.”¹⁸ Such a displacement of narrative probability onto characterological consistency, we shall see, drives one of the period’s key perspectives on the ethics of accident, which maintains that such uncontrollable events are subordinated to the rule of individual will.

“But why do I blame Fortune?” Tom avers toward the novel’s conclusion, “I am myself the cause of all my misery.”¹⁹ The moment demonstrates one of the central uses of accident in the rise of the novel: as a goad to personal responsibility. This sort of logic is not limited to the mid-eighteenth century. In Emma Marshall’s *Over the Down; or, A Chapter of Accidents* (1885), accident offers a crucial stage on the path toward Christian reform. The main character, Christabel, begins the novel “free, heedless” of the “interests of others.”²⁰ In search of her mother’s watch, she climbs to the highest point of the Bream Down and, ignoring her companion’s warning that she is too close to the edge, disappears “over the down,” nearly falling past a rocky cliff to her death. As she awaits rescue, Christabel reflects on her “short, gay, unthinking life” and, concerned about the consequences in the afterlife, begs the Lord for deliverance.²¹ Though soon pulled to safety by several nearby soldiers, Christabel suffers a back injury that leaves her temporarily disabled and, to her profound dismay, confined to bed rest for nearly two

¹⁸ Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling*, 351.

¹⁹ Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling*, 810.

²⁰ Emma Marshall, *Over the Down: A Chapter of Accidents* (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1885), 11.

²¹ Marshall, 50.

years. This aftermath provides the necessary impetus for Christabel to learn the value of personal misfortune — to “Take the sweetness out of pain / Feel the uplifting of the Cross,” as a poem accompanying a get-well bouquet instructs.²² For Marshall, the role of accident is self-evident. As one of the family’s close acquaintances laments, invoking an oft-used shorthand for the family’s many coincident troubles, “A sad chapter of accidents, . . . Let us hope that, like many another of the same kind, good may come out of it.”²³ That accident might be put to good use (say, in “subdu[ing] and restrain[ing] . . . the wayward, harum-scarum Christabel of days gone by”) is less specific to Marshall’s Christian fable than it is an assumed truth about the nature of accident as such.²⁴ Misfortune is here transformed into what Nietzsche might call a “blessedness”: finally learning to “feel the uplifting of the cross,” Christabel develops good moral character by cultivating virtue from pain.²⁵

In defining accident as something to be productively endured — and “Endurance” tellingly serves as the title of the novel’s penultimate chapter — Marshall owes a debt to the tradition of the *bildungsroman*, a mode that privileges character development over plot as a matter of course. Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister* is not unlike *Tom Jones* in his need to disavow external forces of chance as a mark of personal growth. Initially quite eager to assign his circumstances, even his major life decisions, to the “helping hand [of] fate [den hellen Wink des Schicksals],” Wilhelm finds his conviction that “some power . . . rules over us and guides everything to our advantage” put to the test at the end of Book I

²² Marshall, 94.

²³ Marshall, 69.

²⁴ Marshall, 120.

²⁵ Sianne Ngai defines Nietzsche’s *ressentiment* as the transformation of “social weakness from an undesirable situation one must struggle to overcome into a ‘blessedness’ or virtue” (*Ugly Feelings* [Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2005], 33).

during a philosophical conversation with an old art connoisseur from his childhood.²⁶ In response to the connoisseur's admonition against a worldview in which one lets oneself be "carried along by happy chance" only later to declare that one's "wavering existence was a life governed by divine guidance," Wilhelm's language slips effortlessly between fate and accident: "But have you never experienced a situation where some small circumstance made you take a certain path on which a favorable opportunity soon presented itself to you, and a whole series of unexpected occurrences [unerwarteten Vorfällen] brought you to a goal you had yourself hardly envisioned? Shouldn't that encourage you to trust in fate [Schicksal] and its guidance?"²⁷ "Unerwarteten Vorfällen," translated here as "unexpected occurrences" and earlier by Thomas Carlyle as "an accidental occurrence," is taken by Wilhelm to be a physical manifestation of "Schicksal," that is, of "fate" or "destiny." But, as his interlocutor soon makes clear, Wilhelm's initially compatibilist viewpoint does not quite satisfy the purview of *Bildung*. In terms remarkably close to those of Fielding's "Art of Life," the connoisseur asserts that "everyone holds his fortune in his hand, like a sculptor the raw material he will fashion into a figure [die er zu einer Gestalt umbilden will]."²⁸ Künstlerroman and bildungsroman here converge, as the central work of self-cultivation is viewed as its own kind of "artistic activity," the shaping of the raw material of fortune, which "must be learned and actively cultivated [gelernt und sorgfältig ausgeübt sein]."²⁹ This opposition between craft and accident drives the action of Goethe's novel, the climax of which

²⁶ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, ed. and trans. Eric A. Blackall, in *Goethe: The Collected Works*, 12 vol. (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1995), 9:16, 38.

²⁷ Goethe, 38.

²⁸ Goethe, 39.

²⁹ Goethe, 39.

involves Wilhelm's realization that what he'd thought to be the guiding hand of *Schicksal* was in fact the surveillance and direction of the Watch Tower Society; their leader, L'Abbe, is well-known to "try his hand at playing the role of fate."³⁰ By attributing accident to the careful work of human agents rather than to the uncontrollable force of *Schicksal*, Goethe bolsters the role of individual conduct in the places and moments one might least expect it.

Throughout this history arguments based on chance are habitually overcome as a lesson in liberal subjectivity. Accident serves as a means to test and strengthen character, rather than to interfere with it. In what follows, I'd like to posit the long and busy narratives of Frances Burney as an exception to this genealogy in which accident provides a necessary obstacle on the path to moral responsibility. Burney's heroines consistently find themselves in the position of deciding how to act — or, as is more often and perplexingly the case, of discovering how they have been acting — and Evelina provides an unwavering example of this problem. "I am new to the world, and unused to acting for myself," she explains to her paragon suitor, Lord Orville, "my intentions are never willfully blameable, yet I err perpetually!"³¹ If one were looking for a moment to help demonstrate Burney's approach to action, this would make a good candidate. Burney consistently premises her fiction on the hard limit of individual action. Rather than learning to take absolute ownership for their deeds, her characters are often surprised by

³⁰ Goethe, 339.

³¹ Burney, *Evelina: Or the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World*, ed. Edward A. Bloom and Vivien Jones (New York: Oxford, 2008), 306. Hereafter cited parenthetically by page number and abbreviated *E*.

their own conduct — able only to react to actions that appear to have very little to do with their original intent.

In this regard, Burney draws less on the new mode of narrative realism than on an older tradition of theatricality, a lineage that is signaled by the very premise of her first novel, *Evelina*'s "appearance upon the great and busy stage of life" (*E*, 9). *Evelina* moves through society embarrassed to learn "the ridiculous part [she had herself] played," estranged from her own actions, and the "stage" provides an apt metaphor for such an experience (*E*, 34). The theatrical aspects of Burney's fiction have certainly not escaped notice: from contemporary reports of readers acting the part of Madame Duval, or of Samuel Johnson imitating his favorite character Mr. Smith, to the now vast commentary on the subject, Burney's theatricality plays an undeniably central role within her narrative art.³² But the modes of compelled action that I'm suggesting accompany it remain at odds with an even more prominent contribution to the novel: Burney's development of psychological consciousness through her experiments with third person narration and *style indirect libre*. In recent criticism, this tension has been somewhat resolved by distinguishing between those "'blind,' obtuse, or dull-witted . . . characters that weigh down Burney's . . . novels" and her more thoughtful eponymous heroines who can be

³² Burney writes in her journal of 15 September 1778, "Mrs. Cholmondely's favourite is Madame Duval; she acts her from morning to night, & *ma-fois* every body she sees" (*The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney*, 5 vol., ed. Lars E. Troide and Stewart J. Cooke [Montreal: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press, 1988–2012], 3:141). For recent accounts of Burney's relation to the theatre, see Emily Hodgson Anderson, *Eighteenth-Century Authorship and the Play of Fiction: Novels and the Theater, Haywood to Austen* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 46–76; Francesca Saggini, *Backstage in the Novel: Frances Burney and the Theater Arts*, trans. Laura Kopp (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 2012); Barbara Darby, *Frances Burney, Dramatist: Gender, Performance, and the Late Eighteenth-Century Stage* (Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1997); Marcie Frank, "Frances Burney's Theatricality," *ELH* 82.2 (2015): 615–35; and Emily Allen, "Staging Identity: Frances Burney's Allegory of Genre," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31.4 (1998): 433–51.

seen deliberating with the help of such narrative techniques.³³ (It's no coincidence that the Madame Duvals and the Mr. Smiths lend themselves most easily to role play.) As Deidre Lynch maintains, in a claim to which I return later on, "Burney is interested in animated, bouncy heroines with a spring in their step, but she is also interested in bodies whose compulsive motions make them look subjected to remote control."³⁴ The very threat of reification posed by those objectified and automated characters only sharpens Burney's cultivation of the sophisticated, novelistic self — that central character who seems, in contrast to those clunkier background figures, almost excessive in her human agency.

In focusing on the sophistication of character, however, this story misses an abiding narrative issue that takes shape within the first few pages of Burney's novel: the problem of what happens to action within the market structures she so persistently critiques. By dramatizing the perils of contingent action over and above character, Burney suggests that the divide between agentive, liberal self and automaton is more porous than Lynch's account would suggest. Both participating in and responding to ascendant modes of political economy, we shall see, Burney's novels depict a less sovereign, or deliberate, account of character than critics tend to allow — for even her bounciest of heroines. To return briefly to the example of Evelina and her embarrassment, those moments when the young heroine is "[s]hocked to find how silly, how childish a part [she] had acted" are intrinsically tied to the dramatic loss of agency (*E*, 33). Modern editors have noted that by depicting sustained moments of awkwardness

³³ Anne-Lise François, *Open Secrets: The Literature of Uncounted Experience* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2008), 17–18.

³⁴ Lynch, 192–93.

as “embarrassment,” Burney was dealing in a very new sense of the word, which had earlier signified in terms of physical movement: “an impediment, obstruction, or obstacle.”³⁵ Not simply a case of social discomfort, “embarrassment” was more often used to describe a failure of the will, an obstruction to one’s most deliberate and active intentions. It should thus come as no surprise that accident and embarrassment often go hand in hand in the novel — as when Lovel refers repeatedly to Evelina’s social gaffe at her first private ball as an “accident” (*E*, 34–35) or when, “rather embarrassed,” Evelina claims to Lord Orville that her meeting with Mr. Macartney was “quite accidental” (*E*, 299). Taken together, accident and embarrassment mute intention and extenuate responsibility; Evelina is both blocked from deliberate action and unsettled by the awkward situations she has found herself in — she is embarrassed in both senses of the term.

Much like in *Tom Jones* or *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*, the events of Burney’s novel are often propelled and organized by accident, but with the crucial difference that Evelina fails to recover and strengthen her agency as a result. In the text’s thirty-eight recorded instances, “accidents” seem perpetually to befall Evelina but never spur her into taking control.³⁶ Without the help of a narrator to make claims for design, it might be tempting to attribute this proliferation of accident to narrative convenience on Burney’s part. Orville’s constant and coincidental presence wherever Evelina happens to be seems no less an “unconvincing possibility,” after all, than two brothers in two

³⁵ See *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. “embarrassment, *n*”; *E*, 411; and Margaret Anne Doody, *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1988), 58–60.

³⁶ Molesworth remarks on the shared origin of “chance” and “accident” in *cadere* “to fall” (*Chance and the Eighteenth-Century Novel: Realism, Probability, Magic*, 14).

different countries breaking their noses at around the same time.³⁷ And yet Burney is just as insistent on highlighting the gap between action and intention as Fielding and Goethe are on repairing it. Lamenting Orville's having witnessed her encounter with the group of prostitutes in St. James Park, Evelina writes, "Had I been blessed with any presence of mind, I should instantly have explained to him the accident which had occasioned my being in such terrible company: — but I have none!" (*E*, 238). Such unpredictable events persistently overtake the main character's "presence of mind." In its reversal of subject and event, the central verb "occasioned" ascribes agency to external circumstances rather than to character. One in a long series of such embarrassments, this moment diminishes intention through the sheer force of accident, and it remains unclear what lesson there is to be gained. Burney's accidents, while entertaining, provide little insight into proper conduct.

Burney's ethics of accident offers a neat reversal of the logic of character responsibility. Whereas Tom Jones responds to the "dreadful accident" of Sophia losing control of her horse by "lead[ing] her" with one arm while his other broken arm "dangl[es] by his side," Burney's protagonists are far less deliberate in dealing with unlucky turns of fortune.³⁸ To the contrary, it is often those characters who seem most in control of their own actions that are the least to be trusted. Take, for instance, Sir Clement, "more dangerous because more artful," who works tirelessly to exert his will over Evelina by orchestrating what he calls "accidents" to get closer to her. "Chance is my friend," he proclaims, after following Evelina to Bristol under the guise of coincidence; what Sir Clement casts strategically as "accident" is rather the careful

³⁷ Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (New York: Vintage, 2001), 176–80.

³⁸ Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling*, 172, 174.

cultivation of his own predatory art (*E*, 329). Likewise, Captain Mirvan most often derives pleasure from capitalizing on the dramatic loss of agency in other characters, compulsively staging his satires — the theatricalized highway robbery of Madame Duval, or the farcical introduction of a monkey “full dressed, and extravagantly *à-la-mode*” to torment Lovel at the novel’s close (*E*, 399). These scheming characters help remind us of a crueller version of “conduct” in the sense of forced movement. It is rather those “artless characters” who hold the moral vantage in Burney’s fiction. When one woman falls during the horrific octogenarian race, for instance, Evelina is said to “involuntarily . . . [spring] forward to assist her” (*E*, 312); and during the Duval episode, she expresses “unfeigned concern” and “real sorrow” at Madame Duval’s “real suffering” (*E*, 149–50), suggesting a verisimilitude in which involuntary compassion breaks the act. In these moments, Evelina expresses something like Rousseauvian pity, which “sends us unreflecting to the aid of those we see suffering;” her artless, compassionate impulse interrupts the world of reasoned action or theatrical conduct and all of its habitual sanction of cruelty.³⁹

Describing one of the zanier accidents of Enlightenment literature, the hot chestnut at Phutatorius’s table, Laurence Sterne offers a useful generalization on how people tend to respond to such unlikely occurrences: “When great or unexpected events fall out upon the stage of this sublunary world — the mind of man, which is an inquisitive kind of a substance, naturally takes flight, behind the scenes, to see what is the cause and first spring of them.”⁴⁰ We’ve seen how for Fielding, Goethe, and Marshall,

³⁹Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of the Inequality Among Men*, ed. Patrick Coleman, trans. Franklin Philip (New York: Oxford, 2009), 47.

⁴⁰ Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, ed. Melvyn New and Joan New (New York: Penguin, 2003), 290–91.

much like for Phutatorius, “The search [is] not long in this instance.”⁴¹ Accidents may just as easily be caused by a surveilling society or by divine providence as they may be assigned an explanation in Yorick’s dislike for Phutatorius’s salacious treatise. But Burney’s novels demonstrate very little concern for the causes of the accidents that populate them. Take one such “great or unexpected event” in *Cecilia*, when, in seeing a pot of tea about to fall on Cecilia’s head, Delvile expresses his own compassionate impulse. The narrative decelerates to slow motion:

Mr. Meadows, by an unfortunate removal of his foot, bringing him forwarder than he was prepared to go, the tea pot and its contents were overturned immediately opposite to Cecilia.

Young Delvile, who saw the impending evil, from an impetuous impulse to prevent her suffering by it, hastily drew her back, and bending down before her, secured her preservation by receiving himself the mischief with which she was threatened. (*C*, 288)

Impersonality prevails with the “unfortunate removal of [Meadows’s] foot” and the passive “were overturned.” Misfortune overcomes control, and against the automatic motions of Meadows we have the almost supernatural reaction of Delvile, whose compassion finds him both drawing Cecilia back and bending forward to be scalded within a single instant. The passive language of Burney’s dilated account threatens to rival even Sterne’s burlesque on causality, which describes “some one chestnut, of more life and rotundity than the rest, [that] must be put in motion . . . [and falls] perpendicularly into that particular aperture of *Phutatorius*’s breeches.”⁴² Just as the unlucky, disjunctive movement of Meadows’s foot brings him “forwarder than he was prepared,” so the hot chestnut is compelled (it “must be put in motion”), and there’s no need to assign cause in either case outside of an arbitrary twist of fate.

⁴¹ Sterne, 291.

⁴² Sterne, 288.

It might at first seem strange to look to the role of chance in Burney's inflated second novel, which appears to focus, rather, on the story of a young heiress who believes herself an agent but is continually thwarted by the rules of custom and patriarchal inheritance. "Equally quick in forming and executing her designs," Cecilia has trouble letting go of the perilous notion that her actions will seamlessly bear out her intentions (C, 142). One might quickly gloss the novel's plot according to the several agents of her distress. Cecilia's uncle has died, bequeathing her a fortune of 10,000*l.*, as well as 3000*l.* per annum to be released on the condition that she marry and annex her surname to her husband. Although Cecilia intends to live a modest life on only a small fraction of the inheritance, using the rest for charitable projects, her three guardians, Mr. Harrel, Mr. Briggs, and Mr. Delvile, stand in the way. Mr. Harrel extorts nearly all of the initial inheritance; the avaricious Mr. Briggs denies assistance to Cecilia's attempts at charity; and Mr. Delvile, refusing to concern himself with matters of finance, prohibits Cecilia's marriage to his son Mortimer because the proviso that he takes the last name "Beverley" would be a disgrace to the family. This last prohibition leads to Cecilia's financial ruin as, after their failed attempt at elopement, Mortimer convinces Cecilia to give up her name and annuity so that they be married with the family's grudging consent. Soon after the ceremony, a lawyer claims the rest of Cecilia's assets for a distant relative of her uncle. And while Mortimer has engaged in a duel with the conniving Monckton, a homeless and senseless Cecilia wanders through London, later to be found by Mortimer, with whom she goes on to live a happy, though imperfect life. This is one way to tell the story, certainly, but the active verbs remain somewhat misleading, failing to capture the modes of involuntary action that comprise Burney's *Cecilia*.

Although Cecilia may seem, in the words of Henrietta Belfield, to have “everything at [her] own disposal,” it becomes immediately apparent that as an heiress under a system of patriarchal inheritance, overwhelmed by the burden of her name, Cecilia is at the disposal of everyone else (C, 777). Burney is not interested in depicting uninterrupted agency in even her most central and psychologically sophisticated characters. An anxiety, rather, hovers over Burney’s novels that, as Mr. Belfield disparagingly puts it, “Man [might be] treated as an automaton” (C, 734). This anxiety is shared by critical biographers who have felt compelled to maintain that Burney was no “mere impersonal machine”: “Her novels are not automatic transmissions from eighteenth-century drawing rooms. They are the creative products of an actively intelligent, witty, and passionate human being.”⁴³ Applying a similar sort of logic to her fiction, critics have taken the figure of the automaton as something of a background against which Burney’s liveliest heroines can shine — a mechanical ground for the animated figure of the Burney protagonist. Lynch writes of Burney’s aesthetic of the still life, “This enterprise involves pitting Camilla’s motion and liveliness against other women’s lack of ‘animation.’”⁴⁴ In moments like the visit to Cox’s Museum in *Evelina* or the portrait of the physically attractive “idiot” stuttering polite precepts in *Camilla*, Burney neutralizes any such worry about dehumanization by displacing it onto the background characters and set pieces of those texts.⁴⁵

Yet *Cecilia*’s central characters are placed perpetually at risk of automated motion. The theme of the automaton enters the novel in a strange moment at the opera

⁴³ Doody, *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works*, 34.

⁴⁴ Lynch, 187. On the automaton in Burney, see Lynch, 186–99 and Park, 123–57.

⁴⁵ Burney, *Camilla: Or, A Picture of Youth*, ed. Edward A. Bloom and Lillian D. Bloom (New York: Oxford, 2009), 310.

when Morrice describes the *figuranti*, or background dancers, on stage. Unlike the central figures in the action, Morrice suggests, “You never saw such a shabby set in your life: but the most amusing thing is to look in their faces, for all the time they are jumping and skipping about the stage as if they could not stand still for joy, they look as sedate and as dismal as if they were so many undertakers men” (C, 61). As minor characters for the stage, the *figuranti* might certainly serve as the automated, inhuman ground to the figure of the Burney protagonist. And yet young Delvile and Cecilia often approximate something close to these background dancers whose actions seem at odds with the dismal looks on their faces. In a scene from the chapter entitled “A Mystery,” for instance, Delvile begins to act strangely (which is to say, reserved) toward Cecilia: “Delvile did not come in till they were all seated, when hastily saying he was glad to see the ladies so well again, he instantly employed himself in carving with the agitation of a man who feared trusting himself to sit idle” (C, 478). Delvile’s agitation is here almost mechanical, as his actions become alienated through the preposition and indefinite article, “of a man who feared trusting himself.” Described quite accurately by Lady Honoria as “a puppet” of his family, Delvile rarely, if ever, acts in accordance with his desires (C, 484). But it is not merely the explicit force of family pride that softens agency in the novel. Only a few pages later, while overhearing gossip about Delvile’s supposed affair with a gypsy, Cecilia “changed colour repeatedly, and turned so extremely sick, she could with difficulty keep her seat. She forced herself, however, to continue her needlework, though she knew so little what she was about, that she put her needle in and out of the same place without ceasing” (C, 490). Faced with such conflict, Burney’s characters are not the type to carefully deliberate over the best course of action; they experience rather a disjointed

sort of movement in which their “dismal” thoughts are made separate from their agitated limbs.

The affect of compelled motion is perhaps more familiar within the recent logic of late capitalism, where “the surprising interplay between the passionate and the mechanical” is an aesthetic contradiction very much of its moment in “the age of mechanical reproducibility.”⁴⁶ Yet I’d argue that Burney’s automated figures provide an important prehistory to twentieth- and twenty-first-century postures of obstructed agency. Lynch’s description of Burney’s “bouncy heroines with a spring in their step” does not so much oppose the “compelled motion” of Burney’s background characters — as the commentary maintains — as it anticipates what Sianne Ngai identifies much later in literary history as the racialized affect of “animatedness”: the “state of being ‘puppeteered’ that points to a specific history of systemic political and economic disenfranchisement.”⁴⁷ As the epithet “bouncy” suggests, Burney’s fiction walks a fine, often vanishing line between liveliness and compulsion, one that makes it difficult to divide her characters into neat categories like reified object and liberal subject. “Animatedness” stretches beyond the intersection of race and televisual movement that Ngai takes as her focus; she cites, for instance, Rey Chow’s claim that “the automatized other . . . takes the form either of the ridiculous, the lower class, or of woman.”⁴⁸ One sees how Burney might add to this story in Ngai’s example of the “boneless bouncing of the grinning doll” puppet that Ralph Ellison’s narrator happens upon in *Invisible Man*: “Some mysterious mechanism was causing [its head and feet] to move up and down in a

⁴⁶ Ngai, 91.

⁴⁷ Ngai, 12.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Ngai, 99.

loose-jointed, shoulder-shaking, infuriatingly sensuous motion, a dance that was completely detached from the black, mask-like face.”⁴⁹ This simultaneous agitation and deactivation, a “disjunctive logic” that Ngai locates specifically in the Fordist era, rings remarkably close to Burney’s *figuranti*, with their frantic movements and sedate faces — an expression of limited and contradictory agency that, I argue, has its own history within the market structures that Burney sets out to critique.⁵⁰

I began by suggesting that novels in the Enlightenment tend to ascribe an ethics to a certain model of agency, so that those characters who take responsibility for their actions are often valued over those who have recourse to “fortune” and all the senses of political and economic corruption that it carries. But there exists in this period a competing mode of political economy invested, rather, in subordinating matters of individual conduct to circumstances beyond one’s control. Daniel Defoe turns to the language of accident in his *Compleat Tradesman* (1725), an epistolary manual dedicated to the art of commerce. “Some cases may indeed happen,” he notes in an insistently passive voice, “some disasters may befall a tradesman, which it was not possible to foresee; as fire, floods of water, thieves, and many such; and in those cases the disaster is visible, the plea is open, every body allows it, the man can have no blame.”⁵¹ Severing accident from personal responsibility, Defoe displaces agency onto the external world — disasters are simply waiting to “befall” the tradesman, and no amount of skill or “art” can prevent them from happening. He finds support for this logic in a familiar trope of

⁴⁹ Quoted in Ngai, 111–12.

⁵⁰ Ngai, 113.

⁵¹ Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman*, vol. 1, in *Religious and Didactic Writings of Daniel Defoe*, 10 vol., ed W. R. Owens and P. N. Furbank (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), 7:84.

economic and providential contingency, beginning a letter on “Extravagant and Expensive Living”:

[A] ship may as well be lost in a calm smooth sea, and an easy fair gale of wind, as in a storm, if they have no pilot, or the pilot be ignorant or unwary; and disasters of that nature happen as frequently as any others, and are as fatal; when rocks are apparent, and the pilot bold and willful runs directly upon them, without fear or wit, we know the fate of the ship, it must perish, and all that are in it will inevitably be lost.⁵²

Defoe looks to the well-worn figure of the shipwreck to assign the tradesman a contradictory model of agency, in which one participates in one’s fate, even one’s own destruction, following a forward trajectory that is as deliberate as it is inevitable. While a topic like “extravagance” might seem to warrant instruction, Defoe is more interested in the passive, and blameless, experience of “disaster.” However “bold and willful” the tradesman’s movements may be, there remains an overwhelming sense, to borrow the words of Burney’s own Mr. Monckton, that “the track . . . is already marked out.”

No doubt Defoe’s is the kind of logic that Fielding and others were reacting against. But it goes without saying that in depicting her own version of obstructed action, Burney is not interested in exonerating the work of trade; she’s concerned, rather, with postures of disenfranchisement that accompany this new commercial logic in even the most ordinary or domestic contexts. Cecilia’s wedding ceremony, during which she “rather mechanically than with consciousness [appears] to listen” (C, 831), offers one important instance of such contradictory agency. Like Evelina before her, Cecilia’s actions are rarely accompanied by a sound “presence of mind.” Her movements, whether mechanical (as in the ceremony) or agitated and insistent (as with her needlework), are

⁵² Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman*, 106.

disjoined from any sense of “conscious” or deliberate intention. Like many of her fellow characters, Cecilia is, in a sense, piloting her own shipwreck, “falling into” her own inevitable and disastrous fate.

These “mechanical” movements that abound across Burney’s cast of characters may remind us of Heinrich von Kleist’s claim, made only a few decades after the publication of *Cecilia*, that “a dancer who wished to improve himself could learn a great deal from observing [the marionette theatre].”⁵³ For Kleist, as for Burney, a compelled, puppet-like motion is not beyond the range of human experience and affect, but rather central to it: “A purely mechanical viewpoint,” Kleist goes on, is “not necessarily . . . managed entirely without some feeling.”⁵⁴ This much is true for Burney’s third heroine, Camilla who constantly finds herself blushing: “The moment [Edgar] appeared, the deepest blushes covered her face,” an extremity of feeling only heightened when she later finds her “face varying in colour twenty times in a minute, and her whole frame shaking.”⁵⁵ This disjunctive “shaking,” one might even say “animated,” movement, remains key to Burney’s depiction of action across her system of characters. For Cecilia’s experience is not unlike that of the relatively minor, and automatized, Lady Alithea whose “speeches were all replies, . . . which mechanically and regularly flowed from some word, not idea, that proceeded” but who only too soon “felt herself blush. The confusion was painful and unusual to her.”⁵⁶ Here and elsewhere Burney demonstrates

⁵³ Heinrich von Kleist, “On the Marionette Theatre,” trans. Thomas G. Neumiller, *The Drama Review: TDR* 16.3 (1972): 22.

⁵⁴ Kleist, “On the Marionette Theatre,” 23.

⁵⁵ Burney, *Camilla: Or, A Picture of Youth*, 169, 637.

⁵⁶ Burney, *Camilla: Or, A Picture of Youth*, 411–12, 413.

that even the most automated movements can display the height of emotion, and even the strongest feelings may be the most automated.

Burney is not in the business of cultivating protagonists who make the most of their own struggle. Her characters do not, in the end, come to take absolute responsibility for their actions — or for the work of fortune as the case may be — but are rather perpetually compelled by social and economic forces beyond their control. As her increasingly numerous cast of characters suggests, Burney's concern lay not so much in any one individual subject as it did in larger networks of interaction. The abiding threat of automated action that accompanies this shift from the one to the many might help to explain Edmund Burke's protesting in a letter to Burney that in *Cecilia*, "Justly as your Characters are drawn, perhaps they are too numerous."⁵⁷ Not merely a problem of her having come "Young to excessive and sudden opulence," as Burke claims, numerousness risks dispersing weight across too many characters; it risks relegating Delvile and Cecilia — like the similarly self-divided *figurante* — to the automated motion of the background. Burney's inclusion of a chapter entitled "New Characters" in *Camilla* could, in this respect, be taken as something of a sharp riposte. The shift away from individual character is not a failure of Burney's art but rather a central, and insisted upon, aspect of it.

"Such a lot of characters! And so often lacking the grander human qualities."⁵⁸

Zadie Smith thus paraphrases Henry James's famous objection that *Middlemarch* offers "too copious a dose of pure fiction."⁵⁹ The familiarity of such a critique is unlikely to be

⁵⁷ Edmund Burke to Frances Burney, 29 July 1782, in *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney*, 5:87.

⁵⁸ Smith, *Changing My Mind: Occasional Essays* (New York: Penguin, 2010), 29.

⁵⁹ Henry James, Review of *Middlemarch*, in "Current Literature," *The Galaxy* 15.3 (March 1873): 428.

lost on the contemporary novelist. Like Burke before him and like Wood later on, James takes issue with the text's failure to make a moral paragon like Dorothea into "the central figure" of the narrative.⁶⁰ Eliot's inflated cast of characters, James argues, compromises the art of her fiction, which should have taken the form of "an organized, moulded, balanced composition, gratifying the reader with a sense of design and construction" rather than that of a "mere chain of episodes, broken into accidental lengths and unconscious of the influence of a plan."⁶¹ One hears in this pronouncement that foundational divide between essence and accident — a divide that has governed some of literary history's most influential statements on value. On the level of authorial design as well as on that of characterological intent, nothing should detract from the essence of a single, unified action.

We might recall how Coleridge famously proclaimed "what a master of composition Fielding was! Upon my word, I think the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the *Alchemist*, and *Tom Jones* the three most perfect plots ever planned. And how charming, how wholesome Fielding always is!"⁶² "Perfect planning," as ever, demands that nothing be accidental to the main design. *Oedipus Tyrannus*, *The Alchemist*, and *Tom Jones* are, indeed, all propelled by their protagonist's storylines. This tradition of assessment continues to draw from Aristotle's key distinction between literature, which "should be concerned with a unified action, whole and complete, . . . so that (like a living organism) the unified whole can effect its characteristic pleasure," and history, which presents "a single period of time, i.e. all the events that occurred during that period involving one or

⁶⁰ James, 425.

⁶¹ James, 425.

⁶² Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Specimens of the Table Talk of the Late Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 2 vol. (London, 1835), 2:339.

more people, each of which has an arbitrary relation to the others.”⁶³ Suffice it to say that the ideal “living organism” of a narrative is not the animated, disjointed kind we’ve seen in Burney. As James carefully reminds us with his last admonition against the “diffuseness” of *Middlemarch*: “If we write novels so, how shall we write history?”⁶⁴ A lack of compositional unity does not simply detract from the quality of a work but rather undermines its very status as a work of art.

This is what makes Burney’s insistence on “More Characters” so remarkable. Burney maintains her distended character system as a deliberate aspect of her art — more an unwillingness than a failure to place her narrative focus on a single protagonist. Indeed, not every critic takes this to be a flaw in design. As Samuel Johnson once claimed in conversation, Fielding “would have been afraid of her, — there is nothing so delicately finished in *all* Harry Fielding’s Works, as in *Evelina* . . . O, you little *Character-monger*, you!”⁶⁵ As the term “monger” suggests, Burney’s menagerie of actors may in fact be what made her work so threatening, so “delicately finished.” Despite her single-character titles, Burney is not one for placing focus on a “central figure.” In fact, as John Richetti notes, the earliest readers of *Evelina* were “more taken with the world than with the young lady.”⁶⁶ In recalling Burney’s works, one is less likely to think of the cultivated protagonist than of the remarkable event — the octogenarian race in *Evelina* or the teeter-totter accident that begins *Camilla*. And such characterological effacement might be said to find its logical culmination in the incognita/Ellis/Juliet figure of

⁶³ Aristotle, *Poetics*, ed. and trans. Malcolm Heath (New York: Penguin, 1996), 59a23.

⁶⁴ James, 428.

⁶⁵ Johnson, quoted in *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney*, 3:109–110.

⁶⁶ John Richetti, “Voice and Gender in Eighteenth-Century Fiction: Haywood to Burney,” *Studies in the Novel* 19 (1987): 269.

Burney's final novel, *The Wanderer*. James's concern over "diffuseness" is in this sense quite warranted, for Burney's embarrassment of characters risks evacuating character altogether. The small but remarkable shift from the epistolary mode of *Evelina* to the third person narration of *Cecilia* only adds to the effect. Each of *Cecilia*'s 102 chapters is preceded by an indefinite article: "A Prating," "An Incident," "A Mystery," suggesting that no single event is given any more weight or specificity than the other. A "mere chain of episodes," the events of Burney's novels are in fact "accidental" in Aristotle's sense. They flatten out essence and cause in favor of a logic of contingency in which any one occurrence might have an unpredictable influence over any other.

In making the accidents of her novel truly accidental to character development and design — in refusing, that is, to transform misfortune into *Bildung* — Burney registers her skepticism against a narrative ethics that relies on the logic of careful, deliberate action. Burney's project is concerned less with the question of how a character might master her life circumstances than with the way that even the liveliest modes of action may be completely emptied of any conscious intention. This suspension of agency does not immediately reduce the humanity — or artistry — of the novel. The feeling of being propelled by the inevitable and unrewarding movement of accident is rather essential to depicting the human condition. In this way, Burney's art of accident reminds us that the loss of volition is not always a moral failing but rather an experience shared by even the most "diffuse" cast of characters.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Addison, Joseph. *An Essay on the Georgics*. In *The Works of John Dryden*, Vol. 5 of 20. Ed. William Frost. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1987. 145–53.
- , *The Spectator*. No. 69. 19 May 1711. In *The Commerce of Everyday Life: Selections from The Tatler and The Spectator*. Ed. Erin Mackie. Boston: Bedford St. Martin's, 1998. 203–6.
- Agamben, Giorgio. *The Man without Content*. Trans. Georgia Albert. Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1999.
- Alff, David. "Before Infrastructure: The Poetics of Paving in John Gay's *Trivia*." *PMLA* 132.5 (2017): 1134–48.
- Allen, Emily. "Staging Identity: Frances Burney's Allegory of Genre." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31.4 (1998): 433–51.
- Alpers, Paul. "Pope's *To Bathurst* and the Mandevillian State." *ELH* 25.1 (1958): 23–42.
- Ames, Dianne S. "Gay's *Trivia* and the Art of Allusion." *Studies in Philology* 75.2 (1978): 199–222.
- Anderson, Emily Hodgson. *Eighteenth-Century Authorship and the Play of Fiction: Novels and the Theater, Haywood to Austen*. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Aristotle. *Metaphysics*. Ed. and Trans. Hugh Lawson-Tancred. New York: Penguin, 2004.
- Aristotle. *Poetics*. Ed. and Trans. Malcolm Heath. New York: Penguin, 1996.
- Armens, Sven M. *John Gay: Social Critic*. New York: King's Crown Press, Columbia Univ. Press, 1954.

- Aubrey, James R. "Timon's Villa: Pope's Composite Picture." *Studies in Philology* 80.3 (1983): 325–48.
- Backscheider, Paula. "Defoe's Lady Credit." *Huntington Library Quarterly* 44.2 (1981): 89–100.
- Barbon, Nicholas. *A Discourse of Trade*. London, 1690.
- Barrell, John. *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Landscape Painting, 1730–1840* New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1980.
- , *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place, 1730–1840*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1972.
- Barrell, John and Harriett Guest. "On the Use of Contradiction: Economics and Morality in the Eighteenth-Century Long Poem." In *Pope*. Ed. Brean Hammond. New York: Longman, 1996. 117–30.
- Battestin, Martin C. "Menalcas' Song: The Meaning of Art and Artifice in Gay's Poetry." *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 65.4 (1966): 662–79.
- Baudot, Laura. "What Not to Avoid in Swift's 'Lady's Dressing Room.'" *Studies in English Literature: 1500–1900* 49.3 (2009): 637–66.
- Benedict, Barbara M. "Encounters with the Object: Advertisements, Time, and Literary Discourse in the Early Eighteenth-Century Thing-Poem." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 40.2 (2007): 193–207.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. Ed. Hannah Arendt. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken Books, 2007.
- Binhammer, Katherine. "Circulating Stories and Narrative Currency in *David Simple*." *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 56.1 (2015): 1–19.

- Bishop, Elizabeth. *One Art*. In *Geography III*. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2008.
- Black, Fischer. "Noise." *Journal of Finance* 41 (1986): 529–43.
- Blackwell, Alexander. *A New Method of Improving Cold, Wet, and Barren Lands*. London, 1741.
- Blumenberg, Hans. *Care Crosses the River*. Ed. Werner Hamacher. Trans. Paul Fleming. Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2010.
- , *Shipwreck with Spectator: Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1998.
- Boileau-Despereaux, Nicolas. *The Art of Poetry* translated in French and then made English by William Soames, Since Revis'd By Dryden. London, 1710.
- Boswell, James. *Boswell's Life of Johnson*. Vol. 2 of 6. Ed. George Birkbeck, Norman Hill, and L. F. Powell. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1934.
- , *The Life of Samuel Johnson*. Ed. David Womersley. New York: Penguin, 2008.
- Boyle, Robert. *The Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle*. Vol. 3 of 6. London, 1772.
- Brant, Clare and Susan E. Whyman, ed. *Walking the Streets of Eighteenth-Century London: John Gay's Trivia (1716)*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007.
- Breck, John. "Chiasmus as a Key to Biblical Interpretation." In *Scripture in Tradition: The Bible and Its Interpretation in the Orthodox Church*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001. 89–104.
- Brenner, Robert. "The Agrarian Roots of European Capitalism." *Past & Present* 97 (1982): 16–113.

- Brewer, John. "'The Most Polite Age and the Most Vicious': Attitudes towards Culture as a Commodity, 1660–1880." In *The Consumption of Culture 1600–1800: Image, Object, Text*. Ed. Ann Bermingham and John Brewer. New York: Routledge, 1995. 341–61.
- Brewer, John and Roy Porter, Ed. *Consumption and the World of Goods*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Brown, Laura. *Alexander Pope*. New York: Blackwell, 1985.
- , "The Ideology of Neo-Classical Aesthetics: *Epistles to Several Persons*." In *Pope*. 130–42.
- , "Reading Race and Gender: Jonathan Swift." In *Critical Essays on Jonathan Swift*. Ed. Frank Palmeri. New York: G. K. Hall & Co., 1993. 121–42.
- Brown, Norman O. "The Excremental Vision." In *Discussions of Jonathan Swift*. Ed. John Traugott. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1962. 92–104.
- Brownell, Morris. *Alexander Pope and the Arts of Georgian England*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1978.
- Bruyn, Frans de. "From Georgic Poetry to Statistics and Graphs: Eighteenth-Century Representations and the 'State' of British Society." *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 17.1 (2004): 107–39.
- Bucknell, Clare. "The Mid-Eighteenth-Century Georgic and Agricultural Improvement." *Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies* 36.3 (2013): 335–52.
- Budick, Sanford. "Chiasmus and the Making of Literary Tradition: The Case of Wordsworth and 'The Days of Dryden and Pope.'" *ELH* (1993): 961–87.
- Bullard, Paddy. "Gulliver, Medium, Technique." *ELH* 83 (2016): 517–41.

- , "The Scriblerian Mock-Arts: Pseudo-Technical Satire in Swift and His Contemporaries." *Studies in Philology* 110.3 (2013): 611–36.
- Burke, Edmund to Frances Burney. 29 July 1782. In *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney*. Ed. Lars E. Troide and Stewart J. Cooke. Vol. 5 of 5. Montreal: McGill–Queen’s Univ. Press, 1988–2012. 87–88.
- Burney, Frances. *Camilla: Or, A Picture of Youth*. Ed. Edward A. Bloom and Lillian D. Bloom. New York: Oxford, 2009.
- , *Cecilia, Or Memoirs of an Heiress*. Ed. Peter Sabor and Margaret Anne Doody. New York: Oxford, 2008.
- , *Evelina: Or the History of a Young Lady’s Entrance into the World*. Ed. Edward A. Bloom and Vivien Jones. New York: Oxford, 2008.
- , *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney*. Ed. Lars E. Troide and Stewart J. Cooke. 5 Vol. Montreal: McGill–Queen’s Univ. Press, 1988–2012.
- Caldwell, Tanya. *Time to Begin Anew*. Lewisburg, Bucknell Univ. Press, 2000.
- Cather, Willa. *My Ántonia*. New York: Dover, 1994.
- Christmas, William. *The Lab’ring Muses: Work, Writing, and the Social Order in English Plebeian Poetry, 1730–1830*. Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 2001.
- Clover, Joshua and Juliana Spahr. *#Misanthropocene: 24 Theses*. Oakland: Commune Editions, 2014.
- Cogan, Lucy. "Sarah Butler’s *Irish Tales*, A Jacobite Romance." *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 29.1 (2016): 1–22.
- Cohn, Dorrit. *The Distinction of Fiction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1999.

- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Specimens of the Table Talk of the Late Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Vol. 2 of 2. London, 1835.
- Collier, Mary. "The Woman's Labor." In *The Thresher's Labour, The Woman's Labour*. Ed. E. P. Thompson. London: The Merlin Press, 1989.
- Crabbe, George. *The Village: A Poem in Two Books*. London, 1783.
- Crawford, Rachel. *Poetry, Enclosure, and the Vernacular Landscape, 1700–1830*. Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002.
- Dale, Richard S., Johnnie E. V. Johnson, and Leilei Tang. "Financial markets can go mad: evidence of irrational behavior during the South Sea Bubble." *Economic History Review*. 18.2 (2005): 233–71.
- Danielson, Dennis. "The Logic of Pope's Optimism." *Christianity and Literature* 34.3 (1985): 23–36.
- Darby, Barbara. *Frances Burney, Dramatist: Gender, Performance, and the Late Eighteenth-Century Stage*. Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1997.
- Davies, Owen. *Popular Magic: Cunning-folk in English History*. New York: Continuum, 2007.
- Davis, Paul. "'Dogmatical' Dryden: Translating the *Georgics* in the Age of Politeness." *Translation and Literature* 8.1 (1999): 28–53.
- Defoe, Daniel. "On Pope's Translation of Homer." In *Daniel Defoe: His Life, and Recently Discovered Writings: Extending from 1716–1729*. Vol. 3 of 3. Ed. William Lee. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1968.
- , "Essay on Publick Credit." London, 1710.

- , *The Complete English Tradesman, Vol. 1. In Religious and Didactic Writings of Daniel Defoe* Vol. 7 of 10. Ed W. R. Owens and P. N. Furbank. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007.
- Denham, Sir John. "Cooper's Hill." In *The Poetical Works of Sir John Denham*. Ed. Theodore Howard Banks. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1928.
- Dennis, John. *Reflections Critical and Satyrical, upon a late Rhapsody, Call'd, An Essay Upon Criticism*. London, 1711.
- deSilva, David. "X Marks the Spot? A Critique of the Use of Chiasmus in Macro-Structural Analyses of Revelation." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 30.3 (2008): 343–71.
- Deutsch, Helen. "Bolingbroke's Laugh: Alexander Pope's *Epistle to Bolingbroke* and the Rhetoric of Embodied Exemplarity." *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 38.1 (2005): 137–61.
- , *Resemblance and Disgrace: Alexander Pope and the Deformation of Culture*. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1996.
- Dickson, P. G. M. *The Financial in England: A Study of the Development of Public Credit*. London: Macmillan, 1976.
- Di Prima, Diane. "Revolutionary Letter #3." In *Revolutionary Letters, etc*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1974.
- Disney, John. "*FLORA*, In Admiration of the Gardens of Rapin, and the Translation of Mr. Gardiner." In *Rapin of Gardens: A Latin Poem*. Trans. James Gardiner. London, 1728

Doody, Margaret Anne. *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1988.

Dryden, John. *An Essay of Dramatick Poesy*, in *The Works of John Dryden*. Vol. 17 of 20. Ed. Samuel Holt Monk, A. E. Wallace Maurer, and Vinton A. Dearing. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1971. 3–81.

-----, "A Parallel of Poetry and Painting." Preface to *De Arte Graphica* (1695). In *The Works of John Dryden*. Vol. 20 of 20. Ed. A. E. Wallace Maurer and George Robert Guffey. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1990. 38–77.

-----, *Dedication of the Georgics*. In *The Works of John Dryden*. Vol. 5 of 20. Ed. William Frost and Vinton A. Dearing. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1990. 137–44.

-----, *The Georgics*. In *The Works of John Dryden*. Vol. 5 of 20. Ed. William Frost and Vinton A. Dearing. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1990. 155–239.

-----, Prologue to *King Arthur*. In *The Works of John Dryden*. Vol. 16 of 20. Ed. Vinton A. Dearing. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1996. 2–69.

-----, *The Medall. A Satyre against Sedition*. In *The Works of John Dryden*. Vol. 2 of 20. Ed. H. T. Swedenberg Jr. and Vinton A. Dearing. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972. 2:38–52.

-----, *The Art of Poetry*. In *The Works of John Dryden*, Vol. 2 of 20. Ed. H. T. Swedenberg Jr. and Vinton A. Dearing. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972. 124–57.

Duck, Stephen. *The Thresher's Labour*. Ed. E. P. Thompson and Marian Sugden. London: Merlin Press, 1989.

- Durling, Dwight L. *Georgic Tradition in English Poetry*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1935.
- Dyer, John. *The Fleece*. Ed. John Goodridge and Juan Christian Pellicer. Cheltenham: The Cyder Press, 2007.
- Eamon, William. *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1996.
- Ellis, Markman. “‘Incessant Labour’: Georgic Poetry and the Problem of Slavery.” In *Discourses of Slavery and Abolition: Britain and its Colonies, 1760–1838*. Ed. Brycchan Carey, Markman Ellis, and Sarah Salih. New York: Palgrave, 2004.
- Eikenbaum, Boris M. “The Theory of the Formal Method.” In *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views*. Cambridge: MIT Press. 3–38.
- Eliot, George. *Romola*. Ed. Dorothea Barrett. New York: Penguin, 2005.
- Eliot, T. S. “The Hollow Men.” In *Collected Poems 1909–1962*. London: Faber and Faber, 1974. 89–92.
- Ellis, Markman. “River and Labour in Samuel Scott’s Thames Views in the Mid-Eighteenth Century. *The London Journal* 37.3 (2012): 152–73.
- Engel, William. *Chiastic Designs in English Literature from Sidney to Shakespeare*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2009.
- England, A. B. *Energy and Order in the Poetry of Swift*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell Univ. Press, 1980.
- Erskine-Hill, Howard. “Pope and the Financial Revolution.” In *Writers and Their Background: Alexander Pope*. Ed. Peter Dixon. London: G. Bell & Sons, 1972.

- , "Swift's Knack at Rhyme." In *Sustaining Literature: Essays on Literature, History, and Culture*. Ed. Greg Clingham. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell Univ. Press, 2007.
- , *The Social Milieu of Alexander Pope: Lives, Example, and The Poetic Response*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1975.
- Evelyn, John. "The Life of John Evelyn." In *Sculptura; or, The History and Art of Chalcography*. 2nd ed. London, 1769.
- , To Robert Boyle. 9 August 1659. In *Memoirs of John Evelyn*. Vol. 4 of 5. London, 1827.
- , "To the Reader." In *Silva: or, A Discourse of Forest-Trees*. 1662; London, 1776.
- Fabricant, Carole. "Pope's Moral, Political and Cultural Combat." In *Pope*. 41–63.
- , *Swift's Landscape*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1982.
- Farrell, Joseph. *Vergil's Georgics and the Traditions of Ancient Epic: The Art of Allusion in Literary History*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1991.
- Ferraro, Julian. "From Text to Work: The Presentation and Re-presentation of *Epistles to Several Persons*." In *Alexander Pope: World and Word*. Ed. Howard Erskine-Hill. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998.
- Festa, Lynn. *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2006.
- Fielding, Henry. *Amelia*, ed. David Blewett. New York: Penguin, 1987.
- , *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling*. Ed. John Bender and Simon Stern. New York: Oxford, 1996.
- Fish, Stanley. "Georgics of the Mind: The Experience of Bacon's *Essays*." *Critical Quarterly* 13.1 (1971): 45–70.

- Fisher, Samuel. *Rusticus ad Academicos*. London, 1660.
- Foxon, David. *Pope and the Early Eighteenth-Century Book Trade*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1991.
- François, Anne-Lise. *Open Secrets: The Literature of Uncounted Experience*. Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2008.
- Frank, Marcie. "Frances Burney's Theatricality." *ELH* 82.2 (2015): 615–35.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and its Discontents*. New York: Penguin, 2004.
- Gallagher, Catherine. *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670–1820*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1994.
- , "The Rise of Fictionality." In *The Novel*. Vol. 2 of 2. Ed. Franco Moretti. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2006.
- Garber, Peter. *Famous First Bubbles: The Fundamentals of Early Manias*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000.
- Gates Jr., Henry Louis. "In Her Own Write." Forward to *The Collected Works of Phillis Wheatley*. Ed. John Shields. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988. vii–xxii.
- Gay, John. "An Epistle to the Right Honourable Earl of Burlington." In *John Gay: Poetry and Prose*. Ed. Vinton A. Dearing. Oxford: Clarendon, 1974.
- , *Trivia; or, The Art of Walking the Streets of London*. In *John Gay: Poetry and Prose*. Vol. 1 of 2. Ed. Vinton Dearing. Oxford: Clarendon, 1974.
- Gee, Sophie. *Making Waste: Leftovers and the Eighteenth-Century Imagination*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2010.

- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. In *Goethe: The Collected Works*. Vol. 9 of 12. Ed. and Trans. Eric A. Blackall. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1995.
- Goodman, Kevis. *Georgic Modernity and British Romanticism: Poetry and the Mediation of History*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004.
- Goodridge, John. *Rural Life in Eighteenth-Century English Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995.
- Gramsci, Antonio. "The Formation of Intellectuals." *The Norton Anthology of Theory & Criticism*. 2nd ed. Ed. Vincent B. Leitch et al. New York: Norton, 2010. 1002–7.
- Gregori, Flavio. "Introduction: Pope on the Margins and in the Center." In *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 38.1 (2005): i–xliv.
- Hammond, Brean. *Pope and Bolingbroke: A Study of Friendship and Influence*. Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1984.
- Harvey, Karen. *The Little Republic: Masculinity and Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012.
- Heinzelman, Kurt. "Roman Georgic in a Georgian Age: A Theory of Romantic Genre." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 33.2 (1991): 182–214.
- , "The Last Georgic: *Wealth of Nations* and the Scene of Writing." In *Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations: New Interdisciplinary Essays*. Ed. Stephen Copley and Kathryn Sutherland. Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1995. 171–94.
- Hemlow, Joyce. *The History of Fanny Burney*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958.
- Hesiod. *Theogony*. Trans. Dorothea Wender. London: Penguin, 1973.
- , *Works and Days*. Trans. M. L. West. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988.

- Hill, Christopher. *The Collected Essays*. Vol. 1 of 3. Amhurst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1985.
- Hillman, Brenda. "A Short Walk During Late Capitalism." In *Seasonal Works with Letters on Fire*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 2013. 68–73.
- , "Practical Water." In *Practical Water*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 2009. 4–6.
- Hirschman, Albert. *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism Before Its Triumph*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1997.
- Hogan, J. J. "Bicentenary of Jonathan Swift 1667–1745." In *Swift: Modern Judgments*. Ed. A. Norman Jeffares. Bristol: Macmillan, 1968. 47–58.
- Hogarth, William. *The Analysis of Beauty*. Ed. Ronald Paulson. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1997.
- Homer. "To Demeter." In *Homeric Hymns*. Trans. Sarah Ruden. Ed. Sheila Murnaghan. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2005.
- Horace. *Horace: The Art of Poetry, By the Earl of Roscommon*. London, 1709.
- , *Odes*. In *The Complete Odes and Epodes*. Trans. David West. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1997. 25–131.
- , *Satires and Epistles*. Trans. Niall Rudd. London: Penguin, 2005.
- Houghton Jr., Walter E. "The History of Trades: Its Relation to Seventeenth-Century Thought." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 2.1 (1941): 33–60.
- Hume, David. "Of Money." In *Political Discourses*. London, 1752.
- , "Of the Refinement of the Arts." In *Political Discourses*. London, 1752.

- Hunter, Alexander. Preface to *Silva: or, A Discourse of Forest-Trees*. 1662; London, 1776.
- Hunter, J. Paul. "Formalism and History: Binarism and the Anglophone Heroic Couplet." *Modern Language Quarterly* 61.1 (2000): 109–30.
- Ingrassia, Catherine. *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998.
- Irvine, Robert. "Labor and Commerce in Locke and Early Eighteenth-Century English Georgic." *ELH* 76.4 (2009): 963–88.
- Irving, William Henry. *John Gay: Favorite of the Wits*. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1940.
- Israel, Jonathan I. *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001.
- Jago, Richard. *Edge-Hill; or, The Rural Prospect Delineated and Moralized*. London, 1767.
- James, Henry. Review of *Middlemarch*. In "Current Literature." *The Galaxy* 15.3 (March 1873): 424–29.
- Johnson, Samuel. "Dryden." In *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*. Vol. 2 of 4. Ed. Roger Lonsdale. 1779–81; Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006.
- , "On Fiction." No. 4. 31 March 1740. *The Rambler*. Vol. 1 (London, 1740).
- , *The Life of Swift*. In *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*. Ed. Claude Rawson. New York: Norton, 2010. 728–39.
- , *The Vanity of Human Wishes*. In *The Major Works*. New York: Oxford, 2008.
- Kairoff, Claudia Thomas. "Living on the Margin: Alexander Pope and the Rural Ideal." *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 38.1 (2005): 15–38.

- Kant, Immanuel. "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch." In *Kant: Political Writings*. 2nd ed. Ed. Hans Reiss. Trans. H. B. Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991. 93–130.
- Keenleyside, Heather. "Personification for the People: On James Thomson's *The Seasons*." *ELH* 76.2 (2009): 447–72.
- Kleist, Heinrich von. "On the Marionette Theatre." Trans. Thomas G. Neumiller. *The Drama Review: TDR* 16.3 (1972): 22–26.
- Knox-Shaw, Peter. "Pope, Mandeville, and *An Essay on Man*." *Notes and Queries* 61.3 (2014): 398–400.
- Kors, Alan Charles and Edward Peters, ed. *Witchcraft in Europe, 400–1700: A Documentary History*. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.
- Kramnick, Isaac. *Bolingbroke and his Circle: The Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole*. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1968.
- Kramnick, Jonathan. *Actions and Objects from Hobbes to Richardson*. Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2010.
- , "Presence of Mind: An Ecology of Perception in Eighteenth-Century England." In *Mind, Body, Motion, Matter: Eighteenth-Century British and French Literary Perspectives*. Ed. Mary Helen McMurrin and Alison Conway. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2016. 47–71.
- Kramnick, Jonathan and Anahid Nersessian. "Form and Explanation." *Critical Inquiry* 43.3 (2017): 650–69.
- Kroll, Richard. *The Material Word: Literate Culture in the Restoration and Early Eighteenth Century*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1991.

- Lamb, Jonathan. *The Things Things Say*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2011.
- Landa, Louis A. "Swift's Economic Views and Mercantilism." In *Swift: Modern Judgments*. Ed. A. Norman Jeffares. Bristol: Macmillan, 1968. 75–95.
- Landry, Donna. *The Muses of Resistance: Laboring-Class Women's Poetry in Britain, 1739–1796*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990.
- Law, John. *Money and Trade Considered*. Edinburgh, 1705.
- Leapor, Mary. *An Essay on Woman*. In *The Works of Mary Leapor*. Ed. Richard Greene and Ann Messenger. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004.
- Leavis, F. R. "The Irony of Swift." In *Discussions of Jonathan Swift*. Ed. John Traugott. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1962. 35–43.
- Leibniz, G. W. *The Monadology*. Trans. George R. Montgomery. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2005.
- Levine, Caroline. *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2015.
- Levinson, Marjorie. "What is New Formalism?" *PMLA* 122.2 (2007): 558–69.
- Locke, John. *The Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Ed. Peter H. Nidditch. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1975.
- , *Two Treatises of Government*. Ed. Peter Laslett. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988.
- Low, Anthony. *The Georgic Revolution*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2014.
- Lynch, Deidre Shauna. *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture and the Business of Inner Meaning*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Mack, Maynard. *The Garden and the City*. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1969.

- , “‘Wit and Poetry and Pope’: Some Observations on His Imagery.” In *Collected in Himself: Essays Critical, Biographical, and Bibliographical on Pope and Some of His Contemporaries*. East Brunswick, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1982.
- Mack, Ruth. “Hogarth’s Practical Aesthetics.” In *Mind, Body, Motion, Matter: Eighteenth-Century British and French Literary Perspectives*. Ed. Mary Helen McMurrin and Alison Conway. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2016. 21–46.
- Macpherson, Sandra. “A Little Formalism.” *ELH* 82.2 (2015): 385–405.
- , *Harm’s Way: Tragic Responsibility and the Novel Form*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2010.
- Mahaffey, Kathleen. “Timon’s Villa: Walpole’s Houghton.” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 9.2 (1967): 193–222.
- Mahon, Derek. Introduction to *Jonathan Swift: Poems*. In *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*. Ed. Claude Rawson. New York: Norton, 2010. 795–802.
- Mandeville, Bernard. *The Fable of the Bees*. New York: Penguin, 1989.
- Marshall, Emma. *Over the Down: A Chapter of Accidents*. London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1885.
- Marx, Karl. *Capital*. Vol. 1 and 3 of 3. Trans. Ben Fowkes. New York: Penguin, 1990.
- McKendrick, Neil. “The Consumer Revolution of Eighteenth-Century England.” In *The Birth of the Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England*. Ed. Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb. London: Europa Publications Limited, 1982.

- McKeon, Michael. "Mediation as Primal Word: The Arts, the Sciences, and the Origins of the Aesthetic." In *This is Enlightenment*. Ed. Clifford Siskin and William Warner. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2009. 384–412.
- , *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1988.
- , "The Politics of Pastoral Retreat: Dryden's Poem to His Cousin." In *Enchanted Ground: Reimagining John Dryden*. Ed. Jayne Lewis and Maximillian E. Novak. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2004. 91–110.
- McLaverly, James. *Pope, Print, and Meaning*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001.
- Merritt, Christopher. "To the ingenuous Reader." Introduction to Antonio Neri. *The Art of Glass*. Trans. Merrett. London, 1662.
- Christopher, Milbourne and Maurine Christopher. *The Illustrated History of Magic Updated Edition*. Running Press, 2005.
- Molesworth, Jesse. *Chance and the Eighteenth-Century Novel: Realism, Probability, Magic*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010.
- Montagu, Mary. "The Dean's Provocation for Writing the Lady's Dressing Room." In *Eighteenth-Century Poetry: An Annotated Anthology*, 3rd ed. Ed. David Fairer and Christine Gerrard. Chichester: Wiley–Blackwell, 2015. 219–22.
- Montaigne, Michel de. "Of Books." In *The Complete Works of Montaigne*. Trans. Donald M. Frame. Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1957.
- Montesquieu. *The Spirit of the Laws*. Ed and Trans. Anne M. Cohler, Basia C. Miller, and Harold S. Stone. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989.

- Moore, Sean. "The Culture of Paper Credit: The New Economic Criticism and the Postcolonial Eighteenth Century." *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 45.1 (2004): 87–108.
- Morris, William. "Useful Work versus Useless Toil." In *News from Nowhere and Other Writings*. Ed. Clive Wilmer. London: Penguin, 2004. 287–306.
- Morvan, Jean Baptiste. *Reflexions upon Ridicule; Or, What it is that Makes a Man Ridiculous*. London, 1706.
- Murray, Douglas. Abstract to "Mr. Pope and the Architects." In "Abstracts of Papers presented at the annual meeting." *Southeastern College Art Conference Review* 11.2 (1987): 154–83.
- Nacol, Emily C. *An Age of Risk: Politics and Economy in Early Modern Britain*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2016.
- Neri, Antonio. *The Art of Glass*. Trans. Christopher Merrett. London, 1662.
- Nersessian, Anahid. *Utopia, Limited: Romanticism and Adjustment*. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2015.
- Ngai, Sianne. "Theory of the Gimmick." *Critical Inquiry* 43 (2017): 466–505.
- , *Ugly Feelings*. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2005.
- Nicholson, Colin. "The Mercantile Bard: Commerce and Conflict in Pope." *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 38.1 (2005): 77–94.
- , *Writing and the Rise of Finance: Capital Satires of the Early Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994.

- Niedecker, Lorine. "Next Year I Fly My Rounds Tempestuous." In *Lorine Niedecker: Collected Works*. Ed. Jenny Penberthy. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2002. 41–67.
- Nielson, Henrik, James Phelan, and Richard Walsh. "Ten Theses about Fictionality." *Narrative* 23.1 (2015): 61–73.
- Noggle, James. "Taste and Temporality in *An Epistle to Burlington*." *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 38.1 (2005): 117–35.
- Nun, Joshua. *Joshua Against Caleb: Or a Collection of the several writings of Caleb D'anvers, Esq.* London, 1733. 71–76.
- O'Brien, Karen. "Imperial Georgic, 1660–1789." In *The Country and the City Revisited: England and the Politics of Culture, 1550–1850*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999. 160–79.
- Ochs, Kathleen. "The Royal Society of London's History of Trades Programme: An Early Episode in Applied Science." *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 39.2 (1985): 129–58.
- Ogilvie, Sheilagh. "'Whatever is, is right'? Economic Institutions in pre-industrial Europe." *Economic History Review* 60.4 (2007): 649–84.
- Orestano, Francesca. "Bust Story: Pope at Stowe." *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 38.1 (2005): 39–61.
- Oster, Malcom. "The Scholar and the Craftsman revisited: Robert Boyle as Aristocrat and Artisan." *Annals of Science* 49 (1992): 255–76.
- Ovid. *Metamorphoses*. Trans. A. D. Melville. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986.

- Palissy, Bernard. *The Admirable Discourses of Bernard Palissy*. Trans. Aurèle La Rocque. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1957.
- Park, Julie. *The Self & It*. Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2010.
- Patterson, Annabel. *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England*. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1984.
- , "Pastoral versus Georgic: The Politics of Virgilian Quotation." In *Renaissance Genres: Essays on Theory, History, and Interpretation*. Ed. Barbara Lewalski. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1986. 241–267.
- Paul, Helen J. *The South Sea Bubble: An Economic History of its Origins and Consequences*. New York: Routledge, 2011.
- Paulson, Ronald. *Hogarth, Volume 2: Art High and Low, 1732–1750*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1992.
- , *Breaking and Remaking: Aesthetic Practice in England, 1700–1820*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1989.
- , *The Art of Riot in England and America*. Baltimore: Owlworks, 2010.
- , *Hogarth's Graphic Works*. London: Print Room, 1989.
- , *Hogarth: The Modern Moral Subject, 1697–1732*. Vol. 1 of 3. New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1991.
- Peacham, Henry. *The Worth of a Penny. Or, a Caution to keep Money*. Dublin, 1704.
- Picciotto, Joanna. *Labors of Innocence in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2010.
- Pittock, Murray. *Material Culture and Sedition, 1688–1760: Treacherous Objects, Secret Places*. New York: Palgrave, 2013.

- Plato, *Ion*. In *The Early Socratic Dialogues*. Ed. and Trans. Trevor J. Saunders. New York: Penguin, 2005.
- Pliny. *Natural History, Volume III: Books 8–11*. Trans. H. Rackham. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1940.
- Plutarch. *Life of Pericles*. In *Plutarch's Lives*. Vol. 1 of 2. Trans. John Dryden. Ed. Arthur Hugh Clough. New York: Random House, 2001. 201–34.
- Pocock, J. G. A. "Civic Humanism and Its Role in Anglo-American Thought." In *Politics, Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1989. 80–103.
- , *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1975.
- Pollack, Ellen. "The Difference in Swift." In *Critical Essays on Jonathan Swift*. Ed. Frank Palmeri. New York: G. K. Hall & Co., 1993.
- Poovey, Mary. *Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2008.
- , *The History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Pope, Alexander. *An Essay on Criticism*. In *The Poems of Alexander Pope*. Ed. John Butt. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1967. 143–68.
- , *An Essay on Man*. In *The Poems of Alexander Pope*. Ed. John Butt. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1967. 501–48.
- , "Letter XII. Mr. Pope To Mr. Gay." 4 May 1714. In *The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq.* Vol. 8 of 8. London, 1847.

- , *Peri Bathous*. In *The Prose Works of Alexander Pope*. Vol 2. Ed. Rosemary Cowler. 1727; Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1986.
- , *The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace Imitated*. In *The Poems of Alexander Pope*. Ed. John Butt. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1966. 634–49.
- , *The Rape of the Lock*. In *The Poems of Alexander Pope*. Ed. John Butt. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1967. 217–42.
- , *The Poems of Alexander Pope. A Reduced Version of the Twickenham Text*. Ed. John Butt. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1967.
- , *The Poems of Alexander Pope: Translations of Homer*. In *The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope*. Vol. 7 of 11. Ed. John Butt and Maynard Mack. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1967.
- , “To Allen Lord Bathurst: On the Use of Riches.” In *The Poems of Alexander Pope*. Ed. John Butt. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1967. 586–98.
- , “To Mr. Jervas.” In the appendix to Charles Alphonse Du Fresnoy. *The Art of Painting*. Trans. John Dryden. York, 1783.
- , *Windsor Forest*. In *The Poems of Alexander Pope: A Reduced Version of the Twickenham Text*. Ed. John Butt. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1967. 195–210.
- Prior, Matthew to Jonathan Swift. 28 February 1721. In *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D. D.* Vol. 2 of 4. Ed. David Woolley. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999. 367–69.
- Prynne, William. *Histrion-mastix*. London, 1633.
- Puttenham, George. *The Art of English Poesie*. Ed. G.D. Willcock and A. Walker. 1589; Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1970.

- Quint, David. "Virgil's Double Cross: Chiasmus and the *Aeneid*." *American Journal of Philology* 132.2 (2011): 273–300.
- Quintana, Ricardo. *Swift: An Introduction*. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1955.
- , *The Mind and Art of Jonathan Swift*. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1936.
- Rawson, Claude. *Swift's Angers*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2014.
- Rapin, "To my Friend the Translator of *Rapin's Poem of Gardens*." In *Rapin of Gardens: A Latin Poem*. Trans. James Gardiner. London, 1728.
- Rattansi, P. M. "The Intellectual Origins of the Royal Society." *Notes and Records: The Royal Society Journal of the History of Science* 23.2 (1968): 129–43.
- Richards, Bernard. "Pope's Epistle to Burlington 119–26." *The Explicator* 45.2 (1987): 15–18.
- Richetti, John. "Voice and Gender in Eighteenth-Century Fiction: Haywood to Burney." *Studies in the Novel* 19 (1987): 263–72.
- Roberts, Lissa, Simon Schaffer, and Peter Dear, Ed. *The Mindful Hand: Inquiry and Invention from the Late Renaissance to Early Industrialization*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Rogers, Pat. *Grub Street: Studies in a Subculture*. Routledge Revival Series. 1972; New York: Routledge, 2014.
- , "Plunging in the Southern Waves: Swift's Poem on the Bubble." *The Yearbook of English Studies* 18 (1988): 41–50.
- , "Why 'Trivia?' Myth, Etymology, and Topography." *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* 12.3 (2005): 19–31.

- Ronda, Margaret. "'Work and Wait Unwearying': Dunbar's Georgics." *PMLA* 127.4 (2012): 863–75.
- Rorty, Richard. *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of the Inequality Among Men*. Ed. Patrick Coleman. Trans. Franklin Philip. New York: Oxford, 2009.
- Sacheverell, Henry. *Moderation Made Visible*. London, 1710.
- Saggini, Francesca. *Backstage in the Novel: Frances Burney and the Theater Arts*. Trans. Laura Kopp. Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 2012.
- Said, Edward. *The World, the Text, and the Critic*. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1983.
- San Juan Jr., E. "The Anti-Poetry of Jonathan Swift." In *Essential Articles for the Study of Jonathan Swift's Poetry*. Ed. David M. Vieth. Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1984. 21–32.
- Savage, Richard. *An Author to be Lett. Being a proposal humbly address'd to the Consideration of the Knights, Esquires, Gentlemen, and other worshipful and weighty Members of the Solid and Ancient Society of the Bathos*. London, 1729.
- Schoenberger, Melissa. "The Sword, The Scythe, and the 'Arts of Peace' in Dryden's *Georgics*." *Translation and Literature* 23.1 (2014): 23–41.
- Shaftesbury, Anthony Earl of. *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*. 2nd ed. 3 vol. London, 1714.

- Shanahan, John. "The Dryden–Davenant *Tempest*, Wonder Production, and the State of Natural Philosophy in 1667." *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 54.1 (2013): 91–118.
- Sherbo, Arthur. "Virgil, Dryden, Gay, and Matters Trivial." *PMLA* 85.5 (1970): 1063–71.
- Sherburn, George. "'Timon's Villa' and Cannons." *The Huntington Library Bulletin* 8 (1935): 131–52.
- Smith, Pamela. *The Body of the Artisan: Art and Experience in the Scientific Revolution*. Univ. of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Slavitt, David R. "Georgica I." In *Eclogues and Georgics of Virgil*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1990. 43–63.
- Smith, Pamela, Amy Meyers, and Harold Cook. *Ways of Making and Knowing: The Material Culture of Empirical Knowledge*. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2014.
- Smith, Zadie. *Changing My Mind: Occasional Essays*. New York: Penguin, 2010.
- . *White Teeth*. New York: Vintage, 2001.
- Sowerby, Robin. "Review of Caldwell, Tanya. *Time to Begin Anew: Dryden's Georgics and Aeneis*." *The Review of English Studies* n.s. 52.208 (2001): 580
- Spacks, Patricia Meyer. "Dynamics of Fear: Fanny Burney." In *Modern Essays on Eighteenth-Century Literature*. Ed. Leopold Damrosch Jr. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988. 455–88.
- Sprat, Thomas. *The History of the Royal Society of London for the Improving of Natural Knowledge*. 2nd ed. London, 1702.

- Stack, Frank. *Pope and Horace: Studies in Imitation*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985.
- Staves, Susan. "Pope's Refinement." In *Pope*. Ed. Brean Hammond. New York: Longman, 1996. 26–40.
- Steele, Richard. *The Tatler*. No. 9. 28 April 1709. Ed. Donald F. Bond. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987. 79–83.
- Stephen, Leslie. *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century*. 1904. London: Duckworth, 1965.
- Sterne, Laurence. *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*. Ed. Melvyn New and Joan New. New York: Penguin, 2003.
- Stern, Simon. "From Author's Right to Property Right." *University of Toronto Law Journal* 62.1 (2012): 29–91.
- Stevens, Wallace. "The Noble Rider and the Sound of Words." In *The Necessary Angel: Essays on Reality and the Imagination*. New York: Random House, 1951. 1–36.
- . Preface to William Carlos Williams, *Collected Poems, 1921–1931*. In *Critical Essays on William Carlos Williams*. Ed. Steven Gould Axelrod and Helen Deese. New York: G. K. Hall & Co., 1995. 69–71.
- . "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction." In *Wallace Stevens: The Collected Poems*. New York: Vintage, 1990. 380–409.
- Swift, Jonathan. "A Character, Panegyric, and Description of the Legion Club." In *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*. 2nd ed. Vol. 3 of 3. Ed. Harold Williams. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958. 827–39.

- , "A Description of a City Shower." In *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*. Ed. Claude Rawson. New York: Norton, 2010. 515–16.
- , "A Description of the Morning." In *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*. Ed. Claude Rawson. New York: Norton, 2010. 514.
- , "A Letter to the Whole People of Ireland [Fourth Drapier's Letter]." In *The Drapier's Letters and Other Works 1724–1725*. Ed. Herbert Davis. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966. 51–68.
- , "A Short View of the State of Ireland." In *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*. Ed. Claude Rawson. New York: Norton, 2010. 289–94.
- , *A Tale of a Tub*. Ed. Angus Ross. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008.
- , "Carberiae Rupes in Comitatu Corgagensi apud Hybernicos." In *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*. 2nd ed. Vol. 1 of 3. Ed. Harold Williams. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958. 315–19.
- , "Directions for Making a Birth-Day Song," in *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*. 590–96.
- , "Drapier's Hill." In *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*. 2nd ed. Vol. 3 of 3. Ed. Harold Williams. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958. 874–75.
- , *Examiner*. No. 13. 2 November 1710. In *The Examiner and Other Pieces Written in 1710–11*. Ed. Herbert Davis. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966. 8–12.
- , *Examiner*. No. 14. 9 November 1710. In *The Examiner and Other Pieces Written in 1710–11*. Ed. Herbert Davis. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966. 8–12.

- , "Imitation of Horace, Book I, Ode XIV Paraphrased and Inscribed to Ireland." In *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*. 2nd ed. Vol. 3 of 3. Ed. Harold Williams. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958. 770–72.
- , "Ode to Sir William Temple." In *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*. 2nd ed. Vol. 1 of 3. Ed. Harold Williams. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958. 26–33.
- , "Ode to the Athenian Society." In *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*. 2nd ed. Vol. 1 of 3. Ed. Harold Williams. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958. 13–25.
- , "On Wood: The Iron-Monger." In *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*. 2nd ed. Vol. 1 of 3. Ed. Harold Williams. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958. 352–53.
- , "Some Observations Upon a Paper, called, The Report of the Committee of the Most Honourable the Privy Council in England, relating to Wood's Half-pence [Third Drapier's Letter]." In *The Drapier's Letters and Other Works 1724–1725*. Ed. Herbert Davis. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966. 25–50.
- , "Stella's Birth-Day. A great Bottle of Wine, long buried, being that Day dug up, 1723." In *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*. Ed. Claude Rawson. New York: Norton, 2010. 566–68.
- , "Stella's Birth-Day, 1725." In *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*. Ed. Claude Rawson. New York: Norton, 2010. 577–78.
- , "The Battle of the Books." In *A Tale of a Tub and Other Works*. Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2008.
- , "The Bubble." In *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*. 2nd ed. Vol. 1 of 3. Ed. Harold Williams. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958. 248–59.

- , "The Dean's Reason's for not Building at Drapier's Hill." In *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*. 2nd ed. Vol. 3 of 3. Ed. Harold Williams. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958. 898–902.
- , "The Lady's Dressing Room." In *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*. Ed. Claude Rawson. New York: Norton, 2010. 603–6.
- , "The Progress of Beauty." In *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*. Ed. Claude Rawson. New York: Norton, 2010. 546–48.
- , "To Stella, Who Collected and Transcribed His Poems." In *The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift*. Ed. Claude Rawson. New York: Norton, 2010. 554–57.
- Swift to Alexander Pope. 15 January 1730–31. In *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D. D.* Vol. 3 of 4. Ed. David Woolley. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999. 355–58.
- Swift to Charles Ford. 15 December 1720. *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D. D.* Vol. 2 of 4. Ed. David Woolley. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999. 353–54.
- Swift to Charles Wogan. July – 2 August 1732. In *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D. D.* Vol. 3 of 4. Ed. David Woolley. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999. 514–19.
- Swift to Mrs. Moore. 27 December 1727. In *The Works of Jonathan Swift, D. D.* 2nd ed. Ed. Sir Walter Scott. Edinburgh, 1824. 169–71.
- Swift to Rev. Dr. Henry Jenny. 8 June 1732. In *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D. D.* Vol. 3 of 4. Ed. David Woolley. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999.
- Swift to Thomas Swift. 3 May 1692. In *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D. D.* Vol. 1 of 4. Ed. David Woolley. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999.

- Todd, Dennis. "'One vast egg': Leibniz, the New Embryology, and Pope's 'Dunciad.'" *English Language Notes* 26.4 (1989): 24–41.
- Thomas, Richard F. "Virgil's *Georgics* and the Art of Reference." *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 90 (1986): 171–98.
- Thompson, E. P. *The Making of the English Working Class*. New York: Vintage, 1966.
- , *The Moral Economy of the Crowd*. In *The Essential E. P. Thompson*. Ed. Dorothy Thompson. New York: The New Press, 2001. 316–77.
- Thompson, James. *Models of Value: Eighteenth-Century Political Economy and the Novel*. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1996.
- Tillman, James. "Bacon's *Georgics* of Science." *Papers on Language and Literature* 11 (1975): 357–77.
- Tryon, Thomas. *Some Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Tho. Tryon, late of London, merchant*. London, 1705.
- Twin Peaks*. "May the Giant be with You." Episode 2.1. Directed by David Lynch. Written by Mark Frost and David Lynch. ABC, 30 September 1990.
- , "Rest in Pain." Episode 1.4. Directed by Tina Rathborne. Written by Harley Peyton. ABC, 26 April 1990.
- Varey, Simon. *Lord Bolingbroke: Contributions to the Craftsman*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1982.
- Virgil. *Aeneid*. Trans. John Dryden. In *The Works of John Dryden*. Vol. 5 of 20. Ed. William Frost and Vinton A. Dearing. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1990.
- , *Eclogue, Georgics, Aeneid*. Trans. H. R. Fairclough. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1916.

- , *The Georgics*. In *The Georgics of Virgil: Bilingual Edition*. Trans. David Ferry. 29 BCE; New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.
- Walsh, Richard. *The Rhetoric of Fictionality: Narrative Theory and the Idea of Fiction*. Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 2007.
- Warton, Joseph. *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Alexander Pope*. 3rd ed. London, 1764.
- Wasserman, Earl. *The Subtler Language: Critical Readings in Neoclassic and Romantic Poems*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1968.
- Watt, Ian. *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*. 1957; Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2001.
- Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the "Spirit" of Capitalism*. New York: Penguin, 2002.
- Weiss-Smith, Courtney. *Empiricist Devotions: Science, Religion, and Poetry in Early Eighteenth-Century England*. Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 2016.
- Wheatley, Phillis. "On Imagination." In *The Collected Works of Phillis Wheatley*. Ed. John Shields. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988. 65–68.
- , *Thoughts on the Works of Providence*. In *The Collected Works of Phillis Wheatley*. Ed. John Shields. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988. 43–50.
- Williams, Abigail. *Poetry and the Creation of a Whig Literary Culture 1681–1714*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2005.
- Williams, Harold. Notes to "The Bubble." In *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*. 2nd ed. Vol 1 of 3. Ed. Harold Williams. Glasgow: Oxford Univ. Press, 1958.
- Williams, Raymond. *The Country and the City*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1975.

- , *The Long Revolution*. 1961; repr; Cardigan: Parthian Books, 2012.
- Wimsatt, William. "One Relation of Rhyme to Reason Alexander Pope." *Modern Language Quarterly* 5.3 (1944): 323–38.
- , "Rhetoric and Poems: Alexander Pope." In *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry*. Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1954.
- Winn, James. *John Dryden and His World*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1987.
- Wolfson, Susan. "Reading for Form." *Modern Language Quarterly* 61.1 (2000): 1–16.
- Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Ed. Miriam Brody. New York: Penguin, 2004.
- Wolseley, Robert. Preface to *Valentinian; A Tragedy*. In *Rochester: The Critical Heritage*. 1685; London: Routledge, 1972.
- Wood, James. *The Irresponsible Self: On Laughter and the Novel*. New York: Picador, 2005.
- Woodman, Thomas. *Politeness and Poetry in the Age of Pope*. Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson Univ. Press, 1989.
- Woodmansee, Martha. "The Genius and the Copyright: Economic and Legal Conditions of the Emergence of the 'Author'" *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 17.4 (1984): 425–48.
- Woodmansee, Martha and Mark Osteen. *The New Economic Criticism: Studies at the Intersection of Literature and Economics*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Woolf, Virginia. "Craftsmanship." In *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays*. 1942; San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1974.

Y-Worth, William. *The Compleat Distiller: Or, the Whole Art of Distillation Practically Stated*. London, 1705.

Zecca, Amanda Elizabeth. "Undersongs: Left Elegies and the Politics of Community, 1940–1965." PhD Diss. Johns Hopkins University, August 2017.

Zitin, Abigail. "Thinking Like an Artist: Hogarth, Diderot, and the Aesthetics of Technique." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 46.4 (2013): 555–70.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Katarina Louisa O'Briain was born on October 24, 1988 and grew up in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. She attended the University of Alberta, where she received a B.A. in Honours English with distinction. In 2014 she received an M.A. in English and American Literature from Johns Hopkins University, where held a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council doctoral fellowship and served as editor of *ELH*. As a George B. Cooper Fellow, she conducted archival research for this project at Yale University's Lewis Walpole Library in 2015. Beginning Fall 2018, she will be assistant professor of English at St. Mary's University in Calgary, Alberta.